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LETTERS OF

CHARLES LAMB

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE WRITER, HIS FRIENDS AND CORRESPONDENTS, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

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BY THE LATE

SIR THOMAS NOON TALFOURD, D.C.L.

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AN ENTIRELY NEW EDITION

CAREFULLY REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED

BY W. CAREW HAZLITT.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET
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BOOK III.—(CONTINUED).

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN 1801 AND 1820.

CHAPTER XV.

LETTERS TO MANNING AND THE WORDSWORTHS.

[1815.]

THE following letter to Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, who resided with the poet at Rydal, relates to matters of more domestic and personal interest. He returns to the subject of his irksome duties at the India House, of which he has already spoken so bitterly in some former letters; and in one to Miss Matilda Betham, of September 30 this year he remarks, "Your letter has found me in such a distressed state, owing partly to my situation at home, and partly to perplexities at my office, that I am constrained to relinquish any further revision of 'Marie,'" to which there is a reference in the letter to his fair correspondent of the 1st of June next (1816). Miss Betham seems to have resorted pretty freely to Lamb for his assistance and advice. There is another letter to her, in which he says:—"I return you by a careful hand the MSS. Did I not ever love your verses? The domestic leaf will be a meet heirloom to have in the family. 'Tis fragrant with cordiality. What friends you must have had, or dreamed of having!"

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"Thursday, 19th Oct., 1815.

"Dear Miss H.,—I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about; but there is no rest but at one's own fireside; and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness; but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks;—'the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.' Poor C. Lloyd and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can—all the kindness I can, towards you all—God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB."

The following letters best speak for themselves:—

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to Dorothea. Will none of you ever be in London again?

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth,—You have made me very proud with your successive book presents.[1] I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a character in antithetic manner, which I do not know why you left out,—the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete,—and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), 'the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice; I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the 'malicious' will take it to himself. Damn 'em, if you give 'em an inch, &c. The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*,—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes, which are new to me, are so much in the old tone, that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowledge, the 'Four Yew Trees,'[2] and the mysterious

[1] [A new edition of the Poems, in two volumes, including the "Lyrical Ballads," 1815.]

[2] The poem on the four great yew trees of Borrowdale, which the poet has, by the most potent magic of the imagination, converted into a

company which you have assembled there, most struck me —'Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow.' It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. 'Laodamia' is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

"Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years.[1] Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way, which comes not every day, the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is, that your 'Power of Music' reminded me of his poem of 'The Ballad-singer in the Seven Dials.' Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C, which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's 'Principia?' I was lately fatiguing myself with going through a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow—excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regales; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to Bourne. What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered,

temple for the ghastly forms of Death and Time "to meet at noon-tide," —a passage surely not surpassed in any English poetry written since the days of Milton.

[1] [Now in the National Portrait Gallery. Lamb originally intended, when his brother John gave it to him, to leave it to Wordsworth, but eventually made it a wedding present to Mrs. Moxon, who lately sold it to the nation.]

matter-ful creature sucking from every flower, making a flower of everything, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

"I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems,[1] or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do altogether. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems 'by a female friend.'[2] The one on the Wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it. I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged, and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night, last night till nine. My business and office business in general have increased so; I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holiday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some few days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holidays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life I may reckon two-thirds as dead, for time that a man may call his own is his life; and hard work and thinking about it taint even the leisure hours;—stain Sunday with work-day contemplations. This is Sunday: and the head-ache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a

[1] The "Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches among the Alps"—Wordsworth's earliest poems—now happily restored in their entirety to their proper places in the poet's collected works.

[2] By Miss Dorothea Wordsworth.

consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort.

> 'To them each evening had its glittering star,
> And every sabbath-day its golden sun'—

to such straits am I driven for the life of life, Time! Oh, that from that superfluity of holiday-leisure my youth wasted, 'Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.' N.B.—I have left off spirituous liquors for four or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting.[1] Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

"O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! from some returned English I hear that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets,—scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its 'gripple merchants,' as Drayton hath it—'born to be the curse of this brave isle!' I invoke this, not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

"Farewell, in haste, from a head that is too ill to methodise, a stomach to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you! "C. LAMB."

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Excuse this maddish letter; I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

"1815.

"Dear Wordsworth,—The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The 'Night Piece,' to which you refer me, I meant fully to

[1] Alas! for moral certainty in this moral but mortal world! Lamb's resolution to leave off spirituous liquors was a brave one; but he strengthened and rewarded it by such copious libations of porter, that his sister, for whose sake mainly he attempted the sacrifice, entreated him to "live like himself," and in a few weeks after this assurance he obeyed her. [Possibly it was to this porter-quaffing era that we should refer the anecdote about the tavern-keeper, who sent Lamb in a score for liquor had arranged in a single line, described by the recipient as "truly H-Homeric."]

have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down and scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated (by the way, I must look out V. B. for you). So I had meant to have mentioned 'Yarrow Visited,' with that stanza, 'But thou that didst appear so fair;'[1] than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry;—yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one or the two last—this has all fine, except, perhaps, that *that* of 'studious ease and generous cares' has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. 'The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale' is a charming counterpart to 'Poor Susan,' with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the 'Old Thief and the Boy by his side,' which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; 'Susan' stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; 'bright volumes of vapour,' &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant-maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her 'a poor outcast' seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to ex-

[1] "But thou that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation."

press. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now,—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that 'Light-hearted boys, I will build up a Giant with you.' It comes naturally with a warm holiday and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a maying; —*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? *Young Romilly* is divine;[1] the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless—I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves—Shakespear had done something for the filial in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid and flat, and flattering; what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos —when I first opened upon the just-mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, '*What is good for a bootless bene?*' To which with infinite presence of mind (as the jest-book has it) she answered, 'a

[1] The admirable little poem, entitled "The Force of Prayer," developing the depths of a widowed mother's grief, whose only son has been drowned in attempting to leap over the precipice of the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey. The first line, printed in old English characters, from some old English ballad,

'What is good for a bootless bene?'

suggests Miss Lamb's pun. [She made one other, at least, on the occasion of Munden's retirement—sic transit gloria *Munden!*] The following are the profoundest stanzas among those which excite her brother's most just admiration:—

"If for a lover the lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death and from the passion of death?—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day,
Which was to be to-morrow;
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And her's is a mother's sorrow."

shoeless pea.' It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr. Johnson, of the 'Man in the Strand,' and that from 'The Babes in the Wood.' I was thinking, whether taking your own glorious lines—

> 'And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,'

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering it to—

> 'And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,'

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that 'White Doe' you promise.[1] I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, *i.e.*, printed. All things read raw to me in MS.;[2] to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof-sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

"My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Van-

[1] ["The White Doe of Rylston," 4to, 1815.]

[2] [He had said this even of the autograph of Milton's "Lycidas" at Cambridge.]

dyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it?) querulousness about it; yet, hang it! now I remember better, there is not; it is calm, melancholy and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me, in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading 'No thoroughfare.' Robinson's is entire: I wish you would write more criticism about Spencer, &c. I think I could say something about him myself, but, Lord bless me! these 'merchants and their spicy drugs,' which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I engross when I should pen a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilisation, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe; and rot the very firs of the forest that look so romantic alive, and die into desks! *Vale.*

"Yours, dear W., and all yours,

"C. LAMB."

The associations of Christmas increased the fervour of Lamb's wishes for Manning's return, which he now really hoped for. On Christmas-day he addressed a letter to him at Canton, and the next day another to meet him half-way home, at St. Helena, &c. There seems the distance of half a globe between these letters. The first, in which Lamb pictures their dearest common friends as in a melancholy future, and makes it present—lying like dismal truths—yet with a relieving consciousness of a power to dispel the sad enchantments he has woven, has perhaps more of what was peculiar in Lamb's cast of thought than anything of the same length which he has left us.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dec. 25th, 1815.

"Dear old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child was born;* faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel, I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

"Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it

was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney,[1] whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —— or a ——. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

"Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wandering of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They

[1] [Born Mlle. Mercier. She was the last of the series of Holcroft's wives, and after his death in 1809 married Kenney, by whom she had a considerable family. She lived to a good age, and I have often met her.]

are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutation the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognize you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things[1]—of St. Mary's church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

"Come as soon as you can. "C. LAMB."

Here is the next day's reverse of the picture.

TO MR. MANNING.

"Dec. 26th, 1815.

"Dear Manning,—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain agoing; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter

[1] [Reminiscences of Cambridge.]

asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing—but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney never let her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny[1] expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a bran new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla![2] Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his horrid eye upon us, and is wetting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, 'The good man at the hour of death.' I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these letters may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to

[1] [Fanny Holcroft.]
[2] [Priscilla Lloyd, who married Christopher Wordsworth.]

flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena?[1] What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

"God bless you.—Your old friend, "C. Lamb."

[1] [Manning not only heard of Napoleon being there, but had an interview with him.]

CHAPTER XVI.

LAMB'S LIFE IN THE TEMPLE—THE WEDNESDAY EVENINGS—HAZLITT, GODWIN, AND COLERIDGE—HAZLITT'S ACCOUNT OF THESE MEETINGS—LETTERS TO WORDSWORTH, FIELD, COLLIER, ETC.—RHYMING EPISTLE TO AYRTON—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. CHAMBERS OF LEAMINGTON.

[1816-17.]

THE years which Lamb passed in his chambers in Inner Temple Lane were, perhaps, the happiest of his life. His salary was considerably augmented; his fame as an author was rapidly extending; he resided near the spot which he best loved, and was surrounded by a motley group of attached friends, some of them men of rarest parts, and all strongly attached to him and to his sister. Here the glory of his Wednesday nights shone forth in its greatest lustre. If you did not meet there the favourites of fortune: authors whose works bore the highest price in Paternoster Row, and who glittered in the circles of fashion, you might find those who had thought most deeply, felt most keenly, and were destined to produce the most lasting influences on the literature and manners of the age.

There Hazlitt, sometimes kindling into fierce passion at any mention of the great reverses of his idol Napoleon, at other times bashfully enunciated the finest criticism on art, or dwelt with genial iteration on a passage in Chaucer; or, fresh from the theatre, expatiated on some new instance of energy in Kean, or reluctantly conceded a greatness to Kemble; or detected some popular fallacy with the fairest and the subtlest reasoning. There Godwin, as he played his quiet rubber, or benignantly joined in the gossip of the day, sat an object of curiosity and wonder to the stranger, who had been at one time shocked or charmed with his high speculation, and at another awe-struck by the force and graphic power of his novels.

There Coleridge sometimes, though rarely, took his seat; and then the genial hubbub of voices was still. Critics, philosophers, and poets, were contented to listen; and toil-worn lawyers, clerks from the India House,[1] and members of the Stock Exchange,[2] grew romantic while he spoke.[3] Lamb used to say that he was inferior then to what he had been in his youth; but I can scarcely believe it; at least there is nothing in his early writing which gives any idea of the richness of his mind so lavishly poured out at this time in his happiest moods. Although he looked much older than he was, his hair being silvered all over, and his person tending to corpulency, there was about him no trace of bodily sickness or mental decay, but rather an air of voluptuous repose. His benignity of manner placed his auditors entirely at their ease, and inclined them to listen delighted to the sweet, low tone in which he began to discourse on some high theme. Whether he had won for his greedy listener only some raw lad, or charmed a circle of beauty, rank and wit, who hung breathless on his words, he talked with equal eloquence; for his subject, not his audience, inspired him. At first his tones were conversational; he seemed to dally with the shadows of the subject and with fantastic images which bordered it; but gradually the thought grew deeper, and the voice deepened with the thought. The stream, gathering strength, seemed to bear along with it all things which opposed its progress, and blended them with its current; and stretching away among

[1] [Probably not many. Perhaps only Mr. Edward White, to whom there is a pleasant letter further on; Mr. William Evans, by whom Lamb and Talfourd were introduced to each other; and Mr. Ryle, afterwards one of his executors. John Hoole, whose version of Tasso came out in 1762 with a preface by his friend Dr. Johnson, was in the India House. See vol. i., p. 157. Johnson thought that Hoole's translation would supersede Fairfax. For notices of other colleagues of Lamb, see *infrâ*, p. 41.]

[2] [Referring only, I think, to Mr. Thomas Allsop, the friend of Coleridge.]

[3] [The only lady of whom I have heard as attending these evenings was Harriet Hazlitt, eldest daughter of the miniature painter, who told me in 1867, that she well remembered the room, hung round with Hogarths, in the Temple, and that she had, as a girl, to stand on a chair to look at them. She never met any other of her sex there. Charles Lamb gave her a copy of his "Tales from Shakespear."]

regions tinted with ethereal colours, was lost at airy distance in the horizon of fancy. His hearers were unable to grasp his theories, which were indeed too vast to be exhibited in the longest conversation; but they perceived noble images, generous suggestions, affecting pictures of virtue, which enriched their minds and nurtured their best affections. Coleridge was sometimes induced to recite portions of "Christabel," then enshrined in manuscript from eyes profane, and gave a bewitching effect to its wizard lines. But more peculiar in its beauty than this was his recitation of Kubla Khan. As he repeated the passage—

> A damsel with a dulcimer
> In a vision once I saw:
> It was an Abyssinian maid,
> And on her dulcimer she played,
> Singing of Mont Abora![1]

his voice seemed to mount, and melt into air, as the images grew more visionary, and the suggested associations more remote. He usually met opposition by conceding the point to the objector, and then went on with his high argument as if it had never been raised: thus satisfying his antagonist, himself, and all who heard him; none of whom desired to hear his discourse frittered into points, or displaced by the near encounter even of the most brilliant wits. The first time I met him, which was on one of those Wednesday evenings, we quitted the party together between one and two in the morning; Coleridge took my arm and led me, nothing loath, at a very gentle pace, to his lodging at the Gloucester Coffee-house,[2] pouring into my ear the whole way an argument by which he sought to reconcile the doctrines of Necessity and Free-will, winding on through a golden maze of exquisite illustration; but finding no end, except with the termination of that (to me) enchanted walk. He was only then on the threshold of the Temple of Truth, into which his genius darted its quivering and uncertain rays, but which he promised shortly to light up with unbroken lustre. "I understood a beauty in the words, but not the words:"

[1] [Compare the letter to Wordsworth of April 26, 1816.]

[2] [In Piccadilly, I presume, next to Devonshire House. It was a plain, unpretending, old-fashioned place, now demolished.]

> "And when the stream of sound,
> Which overflowed the soul, had passed away,
> A consciousness survived that it had left,
> Deposited upon the silent shore
> Of memory, images and gentle thoughts,
> Which cannot die, and will not be destroyed."

Men of "great mark and likelihood" attended those delightful suppers, where the utmost freedom prevailed—including politicians of every grade, from Godwin up to [Dr. Stoddart], editor of the "New Times."

Hazlitt has alluded *con amore* to these meetings in his Essay "On the Conversation of Authors," and has reported one of the most remarkable discussions which graced them in his Essay "On Persons one would wish to have seen." In this was a fine touch of Lamb's pious feeling, breaking through his fancies and his humours, which Hazlitt has recorded, but which cannot be duly appreciated, except by those who could recall to memory the suffused eye and quivering lip with which he stammered out a reference to the name which he would not utter. "There is only one other person I can ever think of after this," said he. "If Shakespear was to come into the room, we should all rise to meet him; but if *That Person* were to come into it, we should all fall down and kiss the hem of his garment."

The letters of 1816 are comparatively few. There is one to Leigh Hunt[1] (of whom we are to hear more by and by), in acknowledgment of the receipt of a copy of the "Story of Rimini," in which he observes: "The third canto is in particular my favourite; we congratulate you most sincerely on the trait of your prison fruit." We have all heard how sedulous the Lambs were during Hunt's confinement, in visiting him and his family; the affectionate attention of Charles and his sister are delightfully commemorated in the "Epistle to Charles Lamb," which forms part of "Foliage," 1818.

The next letter of the year is to Wordsworth. In this he speaks of his sister as in good health, and is altogether more cheerful.

[1] [The original does not seem to be among the papers of the late Mr. Townshend-Mayer, Leigh Hunt's literary executor.]

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"April 9th, 1816.

"Dear Wordsworth,—Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the books you mean to give me. I will bind up the 'Political Sonnets' and 'Ode' according to your suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read but don't read; and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Covent Garden Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, though (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, though it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil or a Mr. Kean. However, he is going to-day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter, which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate, till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature by instinct to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chymist's Laboratory in Norfolk-street. She might as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls! He has done pretty well as yet.

"Tell Miss Hutchinson my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter; but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time—God bless him!

"Tell Mrs. Wordsworth her postscripts are always agreeable. They are legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. 'Likelihood,' for instance, is thus typified . . . . .[1] I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eyesight!

"Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

"I am called off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool—but why do I relate this to you, who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interest, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu!

"C. Lamb."

"A longer letter when C. is gone back into the country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new books, &c. &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

"Yours again, "C. L."

The next, sent after Coleridge's departure, is fantastically written beneath a regular official order, the words in italics being printed.

"Sir,—*Please to state the weights and amounts of the following Lots of sold Sale*, 181 *for*

"*Your obedient Servant*,

"Chas. Lamb."

It is full of literary interest, and appears to be the first which we possess after Mr. Coleridge's settlement with the Gilmans at Highgate:—

[1] Here is a most inimitable scrawl.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Accountant's Office, 26th April, 1816.[1]

"Dear W.,—I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it, and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would 'batter at your peace.' With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted, called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve. Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. 'Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence' is exquisite. The poems I endeavoured not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone; and I think I succeeded—(Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say) as if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture-gallery I was never at before, and, going by to-day by chance, found the door open, and having but five minutes to look about me, peeped in—just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing 'Christabel,' by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, 'Kubla Khan,' which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it; but there is an observation, 'Never tell thy dreams,' and I am almost afraid that 'Kubla Khan' is an owl that won't bear daylight. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no

[1] [The date of the letter (1816) is confirmed by internal testimony; Talfourd placed it under 1818.]

better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young, I used to chant with ecstasy 'MILD ARCADIANS EVER BLOOMING,' till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and I think it better than 'Windsor Forest,' 'Dying Christian's Address,' &c. Coleridge has sent his tragedy to D. L. T.; it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is at present under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman ?) at Highgate, where he plays at leaving off laud—m;[1] I think his essentials not touched; he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face, when he repeats his verses, hath its ancient glory—an archangel a little damaged.[2] Will Miss H.[3] pardon our not replying at length to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough; Morgan[4] is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles; and the neighbourhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *Author of the Excursion*, I should, in a very little time, lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material!* There is not as much metaphysics in thirty-six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's 'Treatise on the Human Understanding,' or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the 'Pleasures of Hope,' or more natural 'Beggar's Petition.' I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now, within

[1] [He had removed from Mr. Basil Montagu's to John Morgan's, and now finally to Highgate. Compare letter to Southey of October 26, 1818, *infrâ*. At this period of his life Coleridge received a good deal of pecuniary assistance, I believe, from one of his new admirers, Thomas De Quincey. Coleridge used opium.]

[2] [Milton's "Archangel Ruined."]

[3] [Miss Hutchinson, Wordsworth's sister-in-law.]

[4] [The Morgan Demigorgon of a later letter. See p. 38. It was Lamb's very old and dear friend, John Morgan, of whom we shall hear more than once farther on.]

four lines, I was called off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

"N.B.—Nothing said above to the contrary, but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any; but I pay dearer; what amuses others robs me of myself; my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work, it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump, from ten to four; but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head aches, and you have had enough. God bless you!

"C. LAMB."

[The following is the second seemingly extant of a series of letters to a lady, who has been already mentioned as a poetess and a compiler, and as a member of a family which the Lambs had long known. The date is obscurely marked; but the allusion to Coleridge's "Christabel"[1] appears to fix it in 1816 rather than the year previous.]

TO MISS MATILDA BETHAM.[2]

"East India House, June 1, 1816.

"Dear Miss Betham,—All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious

[1] ["Christabel; Kubla Khan, A Vision; The Pains of Sleep." By S. T. Coleridge. 8vo, 1816.]

[2] [Compare the letter to Landor of 1832, and remarks at beginning of chap. xv., *suprâ*. The Bethams and the Lambs were probably acquainted at an earlier date. Lamb speaks of his acquaintance with the father and mother. It was probably through the Fenwicks that they knew them. In my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 88, I give a long letter from Miss Lamb to Barbara Betham, afterwards Mrs. Edwards. From a letter of Mary Lamb to Matilda Betham, we must gather that the MS. of "Marie" had been for some time in the Lambs' hands, and that Miss Lamb had a strong wish that the authoress should let Charles look through it, as he had so often detected errors in works

to you, and you have been all the while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another, and be quiet. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my skull, deep and invisible. I wish I was leprous, and black jaundiced skin over, and that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather, and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. Oh! that I had been a shoemaker, or a baker, or a man of large independent fortune! Oh! darling laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saint's Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity—Otium *cum* vel *sine* dignitate. Scandalous, dishonourable—any kind of *repose*. I stand not upon the dignified sort. Accursed, damned desks, trade, commerce, business! Inventions of the old original busy-body, brain-working Satan—Sabbathless, restless Satan! A curse relieves: do you ever try it?

"A strange letter to write to a lady; but more honeyed sentences will not distil. I dare not ask who revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape and am ashamed; but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' He curse the India House, and fire it *to the ground*), and may no unkind error creep into 'Marie'! May all its readers like it as well as I do, and everybody about you like its kind author no worse! Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again? Why must I write of tea and drugs, and price goods and the bales of indigo? Farewell. "C. Lamb."

"Mary goes to her place on Sunday—I mean your maid, foolish Mary; she wants a very little brains only to be an

which had been overlooked by the most expert. As early as 1804, Matilda Betham published "A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Women."]

excellent servant; she is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

"Have you seen 'Christabel' since its publication?"

Among the frequent guests in Inner Temple Lane was Mr. Ayrton, the director of the music at the Italian Opera. To him Lamb addressed the following rhymed epistle on 17th May, 1817:—

TO WILLIAM AYRTON, ESQ.

My dear friend,
Before I end,
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni,
To give
Him that doth live
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery,
I mean Gallery
Ones:
For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation,
And being at the top of the fashion;
And seldom go to operas
But *in formâ pauperis!*

I go to the play
In a very economical sort of a way,
Rather to see
Than be seen;
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither,
By candle-light
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For height
Against Kean;
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing:
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet;
There'd be many a damn let
Fly
At my presumption,
If I should try,
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish
This, which they call
The lapidary style?
Opinions vary,
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it;
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the poet laureat,
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical,
Was the first who tried it;
But Mellish could never abide it;
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

For who can confute
A body that's mute?
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin,
That's dead and gone,
And stiff as stone,
To convince him with arguments pro and con,
As if some live logician,
Bred up at Merton,
Or Mr. Hazlitt the metaphysician,—
Hey, Mr. Ayrton!
With all your rare tone.[1]

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,
Though you talk'd for ever,
Ever so clever:
When his ear itself,
By which he must hear, or not hear at all,
Is laid on the shelf?

Or put the case
(For more grace),
It were a female spectre—
How could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches,

[1] From this it may at first appear, that the author meant to ascribe vocal talents to his friend, the Director of the Italian Opera; but it is merely a "a line for rhyme." For, though the public were indebted to Mr. A. for many fine foreign singers, we believe that he never claimed to be himself a singer.

With her tongue as dry as dust,
In a sandy place,
Where no peaches,
Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,
To drop on the drought of an arid harangue,
Or quench
With their sweet drench
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict
With their endless nibblings,
Like quibblings,
Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict—
Hey, Mr. Ayrton?
With all your rare tone.

I am,

C. LAMB.

One of Lamb's most intimate friends and warmest admirers, Barron Field,[1] disappeared from the circle on being appointed to a judicial situation in New South Wales. In the following letter to him, Lamb renewed the feeling with which he had addressed Manning at the distance of a hemisphere.

TO MR. FIELD.

"Aug. 31st, 1817.

"My dear Barron,—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of 'The Statesman'—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants

[1] [Mr. Barron Field (whose name has been introduced before), after discharging judicial functions successively in New South Wales (the *Thiefland* of Lamb) and at Gibraltar, settled in England, and devoted his attention to literature. He is the author of an excellent memoir of Coleridge, and edited some early plays for the Shakespear Society.]

where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

"Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain 'small deer.'

"Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:

> 'So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be.'

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death,[1] and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor.[2] He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

"For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing,) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise

[1] [Thomas Mitchell, translator of Aristophanes, and the kind friend of Leigh Hunt in his Surrey Gaol days.]

[2] [This was, of course, a hoax. See letter to Wordsworth of Aug. 9th, 1815.]

your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

"How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

"Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere. "C. L."

[In his paper entitled "Ellistoniana," Lamb remarks: "My first introduction to E., which afterwards ripened into an acquaintance a little on this side of intimacy, was over a counter in the Leamington Spa Library, then newly entered upon by a branch of his family." Now, we know that Lamb was more than once at Birmingham, whence came his very early friend Lloyd, and that he should have gone to a place so nearly adjacent is only surprising when we consider the reluctance to go anywhere in the absence of a distinct motive. However, he did go in this sort of vague, objectless manner to Margate, the Isle of Wight, and one or two other spots—vague and objectless, because there was no hand outstretchable at the other end to grasp his; and so he must have turned aside from Birmingham to pay a flying visit to the neighbouring Spa. Besides Elliston, he met Mr. C. Chambers, probably related to the actor, by possibility the individual who had founded the library; and on his return it was, I allow myself to presume, that he wrote two humorous letters to Mr. Chambers, one dated September 1st, 1817, the other constructively sent in February following. In the former, Lamb makes a reference to some letter in which Mr. Chambers had indulged in a vein of humour, and had inquired respecting the merits, in his correspondent's eyes, of the John Dory. Lamb says, "With regard to a John Dory, which you desire to be informed about,—I honour the fish, but it is

rather on account of Quin," and he draws a comparison between a John Dory and Brighton turbot. "I am sorry," he adds, "that you have got a knack of saying things which are not true, to show your wit. If I had no wit, but what I must show at the expense of my virtue or my honesty, I had as lief be as stupid as —— of the Tea Warehouse."

Lamb's intention of spending the rest of his days in the Temple was not to be realized. The inconvenience of being in chambers began to be felt as he and his sister grew older; and in the autumn of this year they removed to lodgings at 20, Russell Street, Covent Garden, the corner house, a brazier's shop,[1] "a place all alive with noise and bustle," but delightfully situated between the two great theatres. [Lamb used to call it *Russell House;* it was a first floor over the shop subsequently occupied by Creed the bookseller. Here the Lambs were at home, not on Wednesdays as in the Temple, but on Thursdays.]

In November, 1817, Miss Lamb announced the removal to Miss Wordsworth in a letter, to which Lamb added the following:—

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Nov. 21st, 1817.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth,—Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed, it was an ugly wrench; but, like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This where we are is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinoüs, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow-street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-

[1] [See "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 217, for a curious coincidence in connection with Charles Lloyd's lodging at a brazier's in Fetter Lane.]

and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

"Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying![1]

"C. L."

In December, 1817, Wordsworth being in town, and Keats wishing to know him, Haydon made up a party to dinner, and among others invited Lamb, to whom he wrote, telling him the address was as below. He received the following characteristic reply.

TO B. R. HAYDON.[2]

[December, 1817.]

"My dear Haydon,—I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove North, at Rossi's, half way up, right hand side—if I can find it.

"Yours, "C. LAMB.

"20, Russell Court, Covent Garden East,
half way up, next the corner, left hand side."

[Lamb had known the Colliers of Hatton Garden many years, and had solicited the influence of Mr. John Collier, as we are aware, in 1812, with a view to getting some employment on the press for Hazlitt through his son Mr. John Payne Collier, who was on the staff of the "Morning Chronicle," and already beginning to attract attention as a man of widening literary sympathy and power, more especially as a student of our old poets and playwrights. To him Lamb now appealed for help on behalf of a yet older and dearer friend—Coleridge, who was at present in very precarious health, but who, nevertheless, was preparing to deliver two parallel courses of lectures. These, of which

[1] [The Princess Charlotte.]
[2] Taylor's "Life of Haydon," 1853, i. 384.

one series, embracing general history and literature, consisted of fourteen lectures, and the other, on Shakespear, of six, were to be delivered at the "Crown and Anchor," in the Strand, or, as it was eventually arranged, at the rooms of the Philosophical Society, Fleur-de-Luce Court, Fleet Street; and they covered the period between December 7th, 1818, and the following Mondays and Thursdays, Christmas week excepted. But in consequence of the Queen's death, the courses were postponed from the 7th and 10th to the 14th and 17th respectively, as appears from a MS. memorandum in my copy of the original Prospectus, or rather one of them, for I possess two, exhibiting considerable differences.]

TO J. PAYNE COLLIER.[1]

"The Garden of England, Dec. 10. [1817.]

"Dear J. P. C.,—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago.[2] He is in bad health and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakespear and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one); but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on Indian and India-pendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and for the purpose I am once more enduring Southey's Curse.[3] To be serious, Coleridge's

[1] [Coleridge's "Lectures on Shakespear and Milton," ed. 1883, p. 170; Babson's "Eliana," 1866, p. 181. They had been already published by Collier in 1856. Their genuineness was on certain accounts suspected at first; but I think that it has now been placed beyond a doubt.]

[2] [In 1811.]

[3] [A jocular allusion to the "Curse of Kehama."]

state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

"Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,

"C. LAMB."

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTERS TO THE WORDSWORTHS, SOUTHEY, COLERIDGE, THE OLLIERS, COTTLE, AND MANNING.

[1818-19.]

LAMB, now in the immediate neighbourhood of the theatres, renewed the dramatic associations of his youth, which the failure of one experiment had not chilled. Although he rather loved to dwell on the recollections of the actors who had passed from the stage, than to mingle with the happy crowds who hailed the successive triumphs of Mr. Edmund Kean, he formed some new and steady theatrical attachments. His chief favourites of this time were Miss Kelly, Miss Burrell of the Olympic, and Munden. The first, then the sole support of the English Opera, became a frequent guest in Russell Street, and charmed the circle there by the heartiness of her manners, the delicacy and gentleness of her remarks, and her unaffected sensibility, as much as she had done on the stage. Miss Burrell, a lady of more limited powers, but with a frank and noble style, was discovered by Lamb on one of the visits which he paid, on the invitation of his old friend Elliston, to the Olympic, where the lady performed the hero of that happy parody of Moncrieff's "Giovanni in London." To her Lamb devoted a little article, which he sent to the "Examiner," in which he thus addresses her:—"But Giovanni, free, fine, frank-spirited, single-hearted creature, turning all the mischief into fun as harmless as toys, or children's *make believe*, what praise can we repay to you adequate to the pleasure which you have given us? We had better be silent, for you have no name, and our mention will but be thought fantastical. You have taken out the sting from the evil thing, by what magic we know not, for there are actresses of greater merit and likelihood than you. With you and your Giovanni our spirits will hold

communion, whenever sorrow or suffering shall be our lot. We have seen you triumph over the infernal powers; and pain and Erebus, and the powers of darkness, are shapes of a dream." Miss Burrell soon married a person named Gold, and disappeared from the stage. To Munden in prose, and Miss Kelly in verse, Lamb has done ample justice.

[This seems a fit place for a tolerably life-like description of Lamb, as he appeared to an intelligent Frenchman in 1818. In the summer of that year, Philarète Chasles met him casually at the printing office of James Valpy; and, in a paper given in 1842 to the "Revue des Deux Mondes," under the title of "Le dernier Humoriste Anglais," has bequeathed to us a portraiture, which it seems better to convey in his own words :—

"J'etais donc chez James Valpy un soir de Juin, 1818, dans son cabinet, ou il fallait allumer de la bougie à midi et du feu en Juin, lorsqu'un petit et vieux bonhomme noir y entra; ou ne voyait de lui qu'une tête, puis de larges épaules, puis un torse delicat, et enfin deux jambes fantastiquement deliées, et presque imperçevables. Il avait un parapluie vert sous le bras et un très vieux chapeau sur les yeux.

"L'esprit, la douceur, la melancolie, et la gaiété jaillissaient par torrens de cette physionomie extraordinaire. Dès que vous l'aviez vue, vous ne regardiez plus ce corps ridicule; il vous semblait que quelque chose de parement intellectuel etait devant vous, dépassant la matière, brulant à travers la forme, s'entravasant comme la lumière et débordant de toutes parts. Il n'y avait ni santé, ni force, à peine une realité anatomique suffisante, dans ces pauvres petits fuseaux entourés de bas de filoselle chinée, et terminés par des pieds inouis chaussés de larges souliers, lesquels posés a plat s'avançaient lentement sur le sol à la façon des palmipedes. Mais on ne voyait rien de ces singularités; on ne faisait attention qu'à un front magnifiquement développé, sur lequel se bouchaient naturellement des cheveux d'un noir lustré à des grands yeux tristes, à l'expression d'une large prunelle brunâtre et liquide, à l'excessive finesse des narines, sculptés d'une delicatesse dont je n'ai pas vu d'autre exemple, à la courbe d'un nez

très semblable à celui de Jean-Jacques dans ses portraits. Tout cela, l'ovale noblement allongé du visage, les contours exquis de la bouche, et la belle position de la tête, pretaient de la dignité, et la plus haute de toutes, la dignité intellectuelle, à cette organisation débile et disproportionnée.

"Le bon Lamb—une sorte de Labruyère, d'Addison et de Sterne, . . . Charles Lamb, *Carlagnulus*, comme l'appelaient les savans; *Elia*, comme disaient les gens à la mode (il avait trente petits surnoms d'amitie que lui donnaient les diverses classes, et je n'ai jamais entendu personne le traiter de Monsieur Lamb solennellement et serieusement)—le bon Lamb donc venait savoir des nouvelles d'un de ses amis, Hugues Boyce, jeune homme pauvre et poitrinaire . . . ."]

Lamb's increasing celebrity and universal kindness rapidly increased the number of his visitors. He thus complained, in a wayward mood, of them to Mrs. Wordsworth:—

TO MRS. WORDSWORTH.

"East-India House, 18th Feb., 1818.

"My dear Mrs. Wordsworth,—I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it; but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of gourds, cassia, cardemoms, aloes, ginger, or tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections. The reason why I cannot write letters at home, is that I am never alone. Plato's—(I write to W. W. now)—Plato's double-animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally re-united in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office, but some officious friend offers his unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in

great books, or compare sum with sum, and write 'paid' against this, and 'unpaid' against t'other, and yet reserve in some corner of my mind 'some darling thoughts all my own'—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or, as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front; or, as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney. But there are a set of amateurs of the Belles Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, &c.—what Coleridge said at the lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last, before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures, which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanies me home, lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door; up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares, and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication; knock at the door! in comes Mr. Hazlitt, or Martin Burney, or Morgan Demi-gorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. Oh, the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange—for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine. Wine can mollify stones; then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters—(God

bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and deadening; but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on, if they go before bed-time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner; but if you come, never go! The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often; but every time it comes by surprise, that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like, had I any mornings; but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth!) and voices all the golden morning; and five evenings in a week, would be as much as I should covet to be in company; but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L., but always C. L. & Co. He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself! I forget bed-time; but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be a-bed—just close to my bed-room window is the club-room of a public-house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who, being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play-houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer, arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. 'That fury being quenched'—the howl I mean—a burden succeeds of shouts and clapping, and knocking of the table. At length over-tasked nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me! I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke:

> 'Every knell, the Baron saith,
> Wakes us up to a world of death'—

or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is, that by my central situation I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a cheerful glass; but I mean merely to give you an idea, between office confinement and after-office society how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome, and carried away, leaving regret but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect, or I should explain myself, that instead of their return 220 times a year, and the return of W. W., &c., seven times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name, "C. LAMB."

"W. H[azlitt] goes on lecturing against W. W., and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures.[1] S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H.; but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since; and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course; but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works, which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain, lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. 'Gentlemen,' said I, and there I stopped; the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting

[1] [In Hazlitt's "Lectures on the English Poets," delivered at the Surrey Institution, and printed in 1818, he spoke most highly of Wordsworth, and doubtless materially contributed to draw public attention to his writings and genius. Lamb is clearly unjust here to Hazlitt.]

us with visions of seeing the lakes once more, which never can be realised. Between us there is a great gulf, not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope, as there seemed to be between me and that gentleman concerned in the stamp-office, that I so strangely recoiled from at Haydon's. I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—accountants' deputy accountants. The mere abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but as she makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst; but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand,[1] nor Nero—by a decree passed this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Dear W. W., be thankful for liberty."

In the second letter to Mr. Chambers, of Leamington, for which we have prepared the reader (February, 1818),[2] Lamb gives a droll account of some of his colleagues at the India Office. The names of several of these have been recorded above. But there were also Thomas Bye, of whom we again hear in a letter to Manning in 1819; the knave Richardson; young Savory, possibly of kin with Hester Savory of Pentonville; Hedges,[3] "who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporeal and material verities;" Field and Goss, who are mentioned below; Pitman, of whom Allsop tells an odd story;[4] Brook

[1]. [Ferdinand I. of Naples, whose tyrannical government was at that time attracting a good deal of notice.]

[2] [The originals were sold at Sotheby's, March 2nd, 1885.]

[3] [Letter to Southey of Aug. 9th, 1815.]

[4] ["Letters," &c., of Coleridge, ed. 1864, p. 118. "One Sunday, when A. Goss was dining with the Lambs, Pitman was expected to come in later, and Miss Lamb asked who he was. Her brother said that he was a clerk in the India Office. She then wanted to know why, if he invited Mr. Pitman, he did not ask also Mr. White and Mr. Field, as 'it was a pity to give up old friends for new ones.' Then Lamb explained: 'Pitman has been very civil to me, always asking me to go

Pulham, who surreptitiously took his illustrious colleague's likeness—the only token by which he (Pulham) is known; and Ryle, Lamb's co-executor with Mr. Justice Talfourd. For some of these he had a feeling of regard, and occasionally invited them to the Temple; for the greater part he entertained a not unjust contempt.

"I am determined," he writes to Chambers, "my children shall be brought up in their father's religion, if they can find out what it is. Bye[1] is about publishing a volume of poems . . . they are chiefly amatory . . . they are more like Petrarch of any foreign poet, or what we might have supposed Petrarch would have written, if Petrarch had been born a fool. . . . If I am singular in anything, it is in too great a squeamishness to everything that remotely looks like a falsehood. I am called Old Honesty, sometimes Upright Telltruth, Esq.: and I own it tickles my vanity a little. The committee have formally abolished all holydays whatsoever, for which may the Devil, who keeps no holydays, have them in his eternal burning workshop. . . ."

This curtailment of holidays was ordered in the middle of February, 1818, as Lamb states in his letter to Wordsworth just printed. He was at Birmingham this same year, probably on a visit to Lloyd or some of his family, and he may have come across Mr. Chambers again; but we hear nothing further of him.

Another of Lamb's new acquaintances was Mr. Charles Ollier who, with his brother James, was in business as a bookseller and publisher in Vere-street, Oxford-street. He was a young man of considerable literary talent, which he exhibited in the original and beautiful tale of "Inesilla."[2]

and see him; and when the smoking club at Don Saltero's was broken up, he offered me all the ornaments and apparatus, which I declined, and *therefore* I asked him this night. I could never bear to give pain. Have I not been called th'—th'—th'—the gentle-hearted Charles when I was young, and shall I now derogate?'" It was Coleridge who had called him so in print; and Lamb begged him to alter or cancel the expression. As to Pitman, who was a Blue, and a friend of Leigh Hunt, see Hunt's "Autobiography," 1860, p. 241, where he says that his wit and animal spirits were then still keeping him alive.]

[1] [See the supposed reference to Mr. Thomas Bye at the end of the letter to Coleridge of June 14th, 1796.]

[2] [Which the author included in a collection subsequently printed. See Lamb's letter to him of 1824.]

Mr. Ollier, who had at this time Leigh Hunt's "Foliage" in the press, and who probably formed Lamb's acquaintance through that channel, proposed to him the publication of his scattered writings in a collected form. Lamb acceded; and nearly all he had then written in prose and verse was published this year by the Olliers in two small and elegant volumes. When the book was almost ready, at Midsummer 1818, Lamb, it appears, succeeded in getting a holiday, and arranged to go to Birmingham, probably to the Lloyds, perhaps seeing Mr. Chambers and his other acquaintances at Leamington, if there was time; and he was obliged to instruct the Messrs. Ollier to forward certain presentation copies, particularly to Southey and Wordsworth. The Letter to the "Cobbler Gifford," already meditated, was not yet to appear.

TO THE MESSRS. OLLIER.

"June, 1818.

"Dear Sir (whichever opens it),—I am going off to Birmingh^{m}. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {your / my} sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more, and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings —eighteen pounds twelve shillings!!! But here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

"Oblige the obliged "C. Lamb.

"Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate;
"Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane;

"And in one parcel,
directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland

"One for R. S.;
"And one for W^{m} Wordsworth, Esq.

"If you will be kind enough simply to write 'From the Author' in all 4, you will still further, &c.

"Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey, and will take charge of the parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus:

"'R. Southey, Esq. From the Author.'

"'W. Wordsworth, Esq. From the Author.'

"Then, if I can find the remaining 2 left for me at Russell S^t^ when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends *ad infinitum*, yourselves being the last.

"Yours truly, "C. L.

"I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd 'Quarterly.' I meditate an attack upon that Cobler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favourable mention which S. may make in the 'Quarterly.' It can't, in decent *gratitude, appear before.*"

[On back:]
Messrs. Ollier, Library, Vere Street, Oxford Street.

The following letter to Southey shews that he received and esteemed the poems:[1]—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"Monday, Oct. 26th, 1818.

"Dear Southey,—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one; but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall-

[1] [The publishers also forwarded to Shelley at Leghorn a copy of the book; and in a letter to Leigh Hunt of Sept. 8, 1819, his great friend says: "With it [the parcel] came Lamb's works. I have looked at none of the other books yet. What a lovely thing is his "Rosamond Gray"! How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature is in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb's—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection—what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?"]

street, and if it hold out as long as the 'foundations of our empire in the East,' I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent; but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way[1] to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but after all one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's[2] 'Vignettes'? Some of them, the second particularly, 'To Lucy,' are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all. "C. L."

During this time, though there is an apparent absence of actual letters, Leigh Hunt continued to hear from or of the Lambs, and Mrs. Hunt, in a letter to Mrs. Shelley, of the 4th August, 1818, records what does not elsewhere transpire, one of Miss Lamb's experiences of derangement, in feeling terms:—"You will be sorry to hear poor Miss Lamb is ill again; what a sad thing it is for such an admirable woman!"

[1] [We shall soon see, however, that for Coleridge's sake he occasionally and notably at the last, overcame this repugnance. A certain key to this complaint against Coleridge is to be found in a letter to Allsop, of April 18, 1822, where Coleridge says: "Charles and Mary Lamb are to dine with us on Sunday next, and I hope it will be both pleasant and possible for you and Mrs. Allsop to complete the party; and, if so, I will take care to be quite *free* to enjoy your society from the moment of your arrival." And we shall come to another letter from Lamb to a friend—one of those to whom he entrusted such confidences—in which he expresses vexation at Coleridge's not making his appearance till dinner was on the table, and then, almost before the meal was finished, the coach being announced.]

[2] [Matilda Betham. Lamb wrote many notes to her (see under June 1, 1816). Her name will occur again in the later portion of the Correspondence.]

Lamb's interest was strongly excited for Mr. Kenney, on the production of his comedy entitled "A Word to the Ladies." Lamb had engaged to contribute the prologue; but the promise pressed hard upon him, and he procured the requisite quantity of verse from a very inferior hand. Kenney, who had married Holcroft's widow, had more than succeeded to him in Lamb's regards. Holcroft had considerable dramatic skill, great force and earnestness of style, and noble sincerity and uprightness of disposition; but he was an austere observer of morals and manners; and even his grotesque characters were hardly and painfully sculptured; while Kenney, with as fine a perception of the ludicrous and the peculiar, was more airy, more indulgent, more graceful, and exhibited more frequent glimpses of the "gayest, happiest attitude of things." The comedy met with less success than the reputation of the author and brilliant experience of the past had rendered probable, and Lamb had to perform the office of comforter, as he had done on the more unlucky event to Godwin. To this play Lamb refers in the following note to Coleridge, who was contemplating his long-meditated course of lectures on Shakespear, and who sent Lamb a ticket, with sad forebodings that the course would be his last.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dec. 24th, 1818.

"My dear Coleridge,—I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little; but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week;* I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear

Mahomet,[1] we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819—shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer?—how the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

"Believe me ever yours,

"C. LAMB.

"I have but one holiday, which is Christmas-day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's-day, Holy Innocents, &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall."

Since the visit of Joseph Cottle to London in 1802, when the two met pretty often, Lamb had seen nothing of him, nor apparently had any letters passed. Cottle, however, made Lamb a present of his poem called the "Fall of Cambria," and thereby elicited a friendly recognition and a communication rendered interesting by its allusions. Cottle was in his time a rather prolific versifier; but he is only recollected by his book on Coleridge and Southey. So early as 1801 he produced a new version of the Psalms, which was subsequently withdrawn.

TO JOSEPH COTTLE.

"London, India House,
May 26th, 1819.

"My dear Sir,—I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present earlier, but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness, nor disrespect, nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

"I have been in my time a great epistolary scribbler;

[1] [An allusion to the old saying.]

but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out, and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free.

"I have read your "Fall of Cambria" with as much pleasure as I did your "Messiah." Your Cambrian poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as Human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than Divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than any thing else, perhaps; and then some of the Lyrical Pieces are fine varieties.

"It was quite a mistake that I could dislike any thing you should write against Lord Byron, for I have a thorough aversion to his character and a very moderate admiration of his genius; he is great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the man—not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up into a permanent form of humanity. Shakespear has thrust such rubbishly feelings into a corner—the dark, dusky heart of Don John, in the "Much Ado about Nothing." The fact is, I have not yet seen your "Expostulatory Epistle" to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire, and get it forthwith.

"Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly; Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion, for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely, but I think you do not like swearing.

"I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness, and shall be most happy at any and all times to hear from you.

"Dear Sir, yours truly.

"CHARLES LAMB."

In 1819, Mr. Wordsworth, encouraged by the extending circle of his earnest admirers, announced for publication his "Peter Bell"—a poem written in the first enthusiasm of his system, and exemplifying, amidst beauty and pathos of the finest essence, some of its most startling peculiarities. Some wicked jester, gifted with more ingenuity and bold-

ness than wit, anticipated the real Simon Pure by a false one, burlesquing some of the characteristics of the poet's homeliest style. This grave hoax produced the following letter from Lamb, appropriately written in alternate lines of red and black ink, till the last sentence, in which the colours are alternated, word by word—even to the signature —and "Mary's love," at the close; so that "Mary" is *black*, and her "love" *red*.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

[About May 20th,[1] 1819.]

"Dear Wordsworth,—I received a copy of 'Peter Bell' a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind I do not mean *your* 'Peter Bell,' but *a* 'Peter Bell,'[2] which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from the supplementary preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads.' Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Who started the spurious 'P. B.' I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers, the vile Smiths;[3] but I have heard no name mentioned. 'Peter Bell' (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter I mean.

[1] [The date of this letter is nearly fixed by the allusion in that to Manning of May 28th, 1819, to the despatch of a letter "the other day" written in alternate inks. In that of June 7th, 1819, to Wordsworth, he abjures the practice for the future as having a cramping effect.]

[2] ["Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad," Taylor and Hessey, 1819, 12mo. Written in ridicule of Wordsworth, whose poem with the same title Longmans almost simultaneously brought out. The passage at p. 39 in the first edition of the latter was suppressed. Shelley followed up these with his "Peter Bell the Third," by Miching Mallecho, Esq., 1819.]

[3] [I believe not. Lowndes does not include it in the list of their publications.]

I cannot say the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors, to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me the reader at once. 'Hartleap Well' is the tale for me; in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add 'The Waggoner'?—Have I thanked you, though, yet for 'Peter Bell'? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. Coleridge is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him he is generally writing or thinking: he is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock 'P. B.' had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determined to take down the 'Excursion.' I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters, damn 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. Dyer. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as anybody's, and God bless him! anybody's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy they excided curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able

to find it again for you on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but, on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances; and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off—and by this means one copy of 'my works' served for G. D.—and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. Geddes,[1] who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully—my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

"Yours truly,

"CHARLES LAMB.

"Mary's love."

The next letter which remains is addressed to Manning, returned to England, and domiciled in Hertfordshire—probably at Ware with Lloyd or at Wheathampstead among his own people:—

TO MR. MANNING.

"May 28, 1819.

"My dear M.,—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathampstead and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

'Hail, Mackery End'—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once

[1] [As to Dr. Alexander Geddes, a friend of Dyer, see the Clarkes' "Recollections of Writers," 1878, p. 5, and Lysons' "Environs," vi. 243.]

meditated, but got no further.[1] The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye,[2] whom I have known man and madman twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap: a little too fond of the creature—who isn't at times? but Tommy had not brains to work off an overnight's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night and with a superfœtation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native dye, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium. But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf; the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly[3] is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold*[4] is well, but proves 'uncoined,' as the lovers about Wheathampstead would say.

[1] See "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire,"—"Essays of Elia," 1823, p. 172,—for a charming account of a visit to their cousin in the country with Mr. Barron Field.

[2] [The Bye mentioned in the letter to Chambers (*suprâ*), and (as I conjecture) in that to Coleridge of June 14th, 1796.]

[3] [The celebrated actress.]

[4] [Miss Burrell of the Olympic, whose name has occurred before, had married Mr. Gold, and had no family.]

"I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas.[1] Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holiday in the fields a Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk instead of your living trees! But then, again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

"A red-haired man just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off, before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao.

"C. LAMB."[2]

[1] [The letter to Wordsworth which has just been given.]

[2] [With one exception, this closes the correspondence with Mr. Manning. The only other surviving letter is of the year 1825, and will be found in its proper sequence.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"—CHARACTER AND FATE OF MR. JOHN SCOTT, ITS EDITOR—GLIMPSE OF MR. THOMAS GRIFFITHS WAINEWRIGHT, ONE OF ITS CONTRIBUTORS—MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS OF LAMB TO WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, AND OTHERS.

[1818-19.]

LAMB'S association with Hazlitt in the year 1820 introduced him to the "London Magazine," which supplied the finest stimulus his intellect had ever received, and induced the composition of the Essays fondly and familiarly known under the fantastic title of "Elia."[1] Never was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices, numbering a list of contributors more original in thought, more fresh in spirit, more sportive in fancy, or directed by an editor better qualified by nature and study to preside, than this "London." There was Lamb, with humanity ripened among town-bred experiences, and pathos matured by sorrow, at his wisest, sagest, airiest, *in*discreetest best; Barry Cornwall, in the first bloom of his modest and enduring fame, streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, lighting up the wildest eccentricities and most striking features of many-coloured life with vivid fancy; and, with others of less note,[2] Hazlitt,

[1] [See, as to this appellation, the letter to Mr. John Taylor, of Dec. 7, 1822, *post*.]

[2] [I must be permitted to take the opportunity of expressing my surprise and even regret that no mention of KEATS occurs anywhere in Lamb's published correspondence; yet we see from Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography" (1860, p. 269) that he warmly appreciated that unhappy and accomplished writer, whom he had met at Haydon's in the winter of 1817. Speaking of his "Lamia," and other poems printed together in 1820, Hunt says: "I remember Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this book; how pleased he was with the description of Mercury as 'the star of Lethe' (rising, as it were, and

whose pen, unloosed from the chain which earnest thought and metaphysical dreamings had woven, gave radiant expression to the results of the solitary musings of many years. Over these contributors John Scott presided, himself a critic of remarkable candour, eloquence, and discrimination, unfettered by the dogmas of contending schools of poetry and art, apt to discern the good and beautiful in all; and having, as editor, that which Kent recognized in Lear, which subjects revere in kings and boys admire in schoolmasters, and contributors should welcome in editors—*authority*;—not manifested in a worrying, teasing, intolerable interference in small matters, but in a judicious and steady superintendence of the whole, with a wise allowance of the occasional excesses of wit and genius. In this respect, Mr. Scott differed entirely from a celebrated poet,[1] who was induced, just a year after, to undertake the Editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," an office for which it may be said, with all veneration for his poetic genius, he was the most unfit person who could be found in the wide world of letters—who regarded a magazine as if it were a long affidavit or a short answer in Chancery, in which the absolute truth of every sentiment and the propriety of every jest were verified by the editor's oath or solemn affirmation; who stopped the press for a week at a comma, balanced contending epithets for a fortnight; and at last grew rash in despair, and tossed the nearest and often the worst article, "unwhipped of justice," to the impatient printer. Mr. Scott, indeed, was more fit to preside over a little commonwealth of authors than to hold a despotic rule over subject contributors; he had not the airy grace of Jeffrey by which he might give a certain familiar liveliness to the most laborious disquisitions, and shed the glancing light of fancy among party manifestoes, nor the boisterous vigour of Wilson, riotous in power, reckless in

glittering as he came upon that pale region), and the fine, daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem (Isabella)—

> 'So the two brothers and *their murdered man*
> Rode past fair Florence ——.'

So also the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes praying beneath the painted window."]

[1] [Campbell.]

wisdom: fusing the production of various intellects into one brilliant reflection of his own master-mind—and it was well that he wanted these weapons of a tyranny which his chief contributors were too original and too sturdy to endure. He heartily enjoyed his position, duly appreciated his contributors and himself; and when he gave audience to some young aspirant for periodical honours at a late breakfast, amidst the luxurious confusion of newspapers, reviews and uncut novels, lying about in fascinating litter, and carelessly enunciated schemes for bright successions of essays, he seemed destined for many years of that happy excitement in which thought perpetually glows into unruffled but energetic language, and is assured by the echoes of the world.

Alas! a few days after he thus appeared the object of admiration and envy to a young visitor in his rooms in York-street, he was stretched on a bed of mental agony—the foolish victim of the guilty custom of a world which would have laughed at him for regarding himself as within the sphere of its opinion, if he had not died to shame it! In a luckless hour, instead of seeking to oppose the bitter personalities of "Blackwood" by the exhibition of a serener power, he rushed with spurious chivalry into a personal contest, caught up the weapons which he had himself denounced, and sought to unmask his opponents and draw them beyond the pale of literary courtesy; placed himself thus in a doubtful position in which he could neither consistently reject an appeal to the conventional arbitrament of violence nor embrace it; lost his most legitimate opportunity of daring the unhallowed strife, found another with an antagonist connected with the quarrel only by too zealous a friendship; and, at last, met his death almost by lamentable accident, in the uncertain glimmer of moonlight, from the hand of one who went out resolved not to harm him! Such was the melancholy result—first of a controversy too envenomed—and afterwards of enthralment in usages, absurd in all, but most absurd when applied by a literary man to a literary quarrel. Apart from higher considerations, it may befit a life destined for the listless excesses of gaiety to be cast on an idle brawl;—"a youth of folly, an old age of cards" may be no great sacrifice to

preserve the hollow truce of fashionable society; but for men of thought—whose minds are their possession, and who seek to live in the minds of others by sympathy with their thoughts—for *them* to hazard a thoughtful being because they dare not own that they prefer life to death—contemplation to the grave—the preparation for eternity to the unbidden entrance on its terrors, would be ridiculous, if it did not become tragical. "Sir, I am a metaphysician!" said Hazlitt once, when in a fierce dispute respecting the colours of Holbein and Vandyke, words almost became things; "and nothing makes an impression upon me but abstract ideas;" and woeful, indeed, is the mockery when thinkers condescend to be duellists!

The Magazine did not perish with its editor; though its unity of purpose was lost, it was still rich in essays of surpassing individual merit; among which the masterly vindication of the true dramatic style by Darley: the articles of Cary, the admirable translator of Dante; and the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," held a distinguished place. Mr. De Quincey, whose youth had been inspired by enthusiastic admiration of Coleridge, shown in contributions to "The Friend" not unworthy of his master, and substantial contributions of the blessings of fortune, came up to London, and found an admiring welcome from Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the publishers into whose hands the "London Magazine" had passed. After the good old fashion of the GREAT TRADE, these genial booksellers used to assemble their contributors round their hospitable table in Fleet Street, where Mr. De Quincey was introduced to his new allies. Among the contributors who partook of their professional festivities, was a gentleman whose subsequent career has invested the recollection of his appearances in the familiarity of social life with fearful interest—Mr. Thomas Griffiths Wainewright.[1] He was then a young

[1] [A much fuller account of Wainewright, both personal and literary, is given in the little volume, in which I collected his "Essays and Criticisms," with a biographical narrative prefixed, 12mo. 1880. In 1825, appeared a small octavo, a copy of which is in the British Museum, entitled, "Some Passages in the Life of Egomet Bonmot, Esquire," edited by Mr. Mwanghmein. Now first published by Me. I was not aware of this publication till my attention was recently drawn to

man on the bright side of thirty, with a sort of undress military air and the conversation of a smart, lively, clever, heartless, voluptuous coxcomb. He had been an officer in the Dragoons, and had tried various occupations; and he now condescended to take a part in periodical literature with the careless grace of an amateur who felt himself above it. He was an artist also, sketched boldly and graphically, exhibited a portfolio of his own drawings of female beauty, in which the voluptuous trembled on the borders of the indelicate, and seized on the critical department of the Fine Arts, both in and out of the Magazine, undisturbed by the presence or pretensions of the finest critic on Art who ever wrote—William Hazlitt. On this subject, he composed, for the Magazine, under the signatures of Janus Weathercock, Cornelius van Vinkbooms, or Egomet Bonmot, articles of flashy assumption—in which disdainful notices of living artists were set off by fascinating references to the personal appearance, accomplishments and luxurious appliances of the writer, ever the first hero of his essay. He created a new sensation in the sedate circle, not only by his braided surtouts, jewelled fingers and various neck-handkerchiefs, but by ostentatious contempt for everything in the world but elegant enjoyment. Lamb, who delighted to find sympathy in dissimilitude, fancied that he really liked him; took, as he ever did, the genial side of character; and, instead of disliking the rake in the critic, thought it pleasant to detect so much taste and good-nature in a fashionable *roué*, and regarded all his vapid gaiety, which to severer observers looked like impertinence, as the playful effusion of a remarkably guileless nature. We lost sight of him when the career of the "London Magazine" ended; and Lamb did not live to learn the sequel of his history.

Lamb was greatly pleased by the dedication to him of Wordsworth's newly published poem of "The Waggoner," which the author had read to him in MS. thirteen years before. On receipt of the little volume, Lamb acknowledged it as follows:—

it by Dr. Garnett. My old friend, F. G. Stephens, has lately pointed out to me that Wainewright exhibited studies of cattle at the Royal Academy during the years 1821-5.]

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"June 7th, 1819.

"My dear Wordsworth,—You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through; yet 'Benjamin' is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it; it is as good as it was in 1806; and it will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication;—but I will not enter into personal themes, else, substituting * * * * * * * * * * * for Ben, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward; but I reject the omen, especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

"I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*), by the command of Hiero the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place?—fie on my neglect of history!)—I can conceive him by command of Hiero or Perillus set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean panegyric in lines, alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse; he would have call'd for the bull for a relief. Neither could 'Lycidas' or the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of 'Samson Agonistes,' have been written with two inks. Your couplets with points, epilogues to 'Mr. H.s,' &c., might be even benefited by the twyfount, where one line (the second) is for point and the first for rhyme. I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another; and Rogers with his silver standish, having one ink only, I will bet my 'Ode on Tobacco' against the 'Pleasures of Memory,'—and 'Hope,' too, shall put more fervour of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

"The 'Waggoner' is very ill put up in boards—at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication; but that is a mechanical fault. I re-read the 'White Doe of Rylstone;' the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla Novello,[1] a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A.; which makes me think, with some other trifles, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

"Manning has just sent it home, and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it: 'I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I am got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed.[2] 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, &c.,' and so he goes on.

"I do not know which I like best,—the prologue (the latter part especially) to P. Bell, or the epilogue to Benjamin. Yes, I tell stories; I do know I like the last best; and the 'Waggoner' altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the 'Itinerant.' If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so. The Sonnets are not all new to me; of those which are new the ninth I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favour done to me. Being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedic—— I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

"If, as you say, the 'Waggoner,' in some sort, came at my call, O, for a potent voice to call forth the 'Recluse'

[1] [Wife of Mr. Vincent Novello. See a long letter to her from Mary Lamb in "Mary and Charles Lamb." 1874, p. 89.]

[2] "N.B.—M., from his peregrinations, is twelve or fourteen years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late."

from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world.

"Had I three inks, I would invoke him! Talfourd has written a most kind review of 'J. Woodvil,' &c., in the 'Champion.' He is your most zealous admirer in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabb Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not choosing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal? "C. LAMB."

The following letter is addressed to Miss Wordsworth, on Wordsworth's second son, then a scholar at the Charterhouse, visiting Lamb.

TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"25th November, 1819.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth,—You will think me negligent; but I wanted to see more of Willy before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium tantum vidi;* but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the 'natural sprouts of his own.' But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge[1] he remarked that, if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a touch of the comparative; but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist, he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as

[1] [It had been first opened only some two years before—on the 18th June, 1817.]

to the flux and reflux; which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, 'Then it must come to the same thing at last'—which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child's imagination! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead; and, on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another or none. But again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing)[1] which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative; for, being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, 'I cannot hit that beast.' Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term—a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation—a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent personification into men might meet, as I take it: illustrative of that excellent remark in a certain preface about imagination, explaining 'Like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself!' Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

"It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to

[1] [The Golden *Cross* at Charing Cross is an old sign; but I do not know the Golden Eagle.]

guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25 and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion; as when he would ask if London were as big as Ambleside; and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of skull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

"Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

"Yours, and yours most sincerely,

"C. Lamb."

CHAPTER XIX.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH THOMAS ALLSOP—LETTERS TO HIM AND COLERIDGE.

[1819-20.]

[THE name of Thomas Allsop now first springs into prominence as the recipient of letters and notes from Lamb; but at what precise time the latter made his acquaintance is uncertain, though that he made it through Coleridge is undoubted. In his "Recollections of Coleridge," Allsop observes:—"Well do I remember the first time I met this most delightful couple, and the kindness with which I was received and greeted by this twin union in partition: . . . no man that I have ever known was so well fitted to attract and engage the sympathies, the love, the affectionate regards, and the respect of ingenuous natures." But no date is given; and, again, "The first night I ever spent with Lamb was after a day with Coleridge, when we returned by the same stage, and from something I had said or done of an unusual kind, I was called to pass the night with him and his sister. . . . He asked me what I thought of Coleridge. I spoke as I thought. "You should have seen him twenty years ago," said he, with one of his sweet smiles, "when he was with me at the 'Cat and Salutation' in Newgate Market. *Those were* days and nights! but they were marked with a white stone. Such were his extraordinary powers that, when it was time for him to go and be married, the landlord entreated his stay, and offered him free quarters if he would only talk." The first letter from Coleridge to Allsop is of January 28th, 1818, and appears to have arisen out of Coleridge's lectures then in course of delivery; the earliest from Lamb, as we see, is of November, 1819; and the probability seems to be, that he and Allsop did not meet or correspond till this time, about two years after Allsop's self-introduction to Coleridge. Allsop at one period of his life appears to have

kept a lace-shop somewhere between Oxford Street and Great Castle Street; but he afterwards joined the Stock Exchange, where he was, on the whole, successful; though at one period, as we know from contemporary allusions in the Coleridge and Lamb correspondence, some great calamity overtook him. He continued to have friendly relations with the Lambs to the last; but the correspondence is, in a literary sense, of little or no importance, and many of the communications, as in other cases to be noticed, are mere scraps. The earliest to which we have had access is of 1819, and thanks Allsop for some service which he had promised to perform.]

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

"Saturday, Nov. 29, 1819.

"Dear Sir,—Many thanks for your offer. I have desired the youth to wait upon you, if you will give him leave, that he may give his own answer to your kind proposal of trying to find something for him. My sister begs you will accept her thanks with mine. We shall be at home at all times, most happy to see you when you are in town. We are mostly to be found in an evening.

"Your obliged,

"C. Lamb."

The following letter to an older correspondent is entirely in red ink, a new experiment:—

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Jan. 10th, 1820.

"Dear Coleridge,—A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I ad-

mire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since; he almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which.[1] But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work 'telling again,' as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and a (not friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, 'you know best.' I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations—so don't imagine one.[2] That Manchester sonnet[3] I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet about Browne into 'Blackwood'? I did not. So no more, till we meet.

"Ever yours, "C. L."

After this date, the letters to Coleridge become very few and far between. But it is gatherable from a letter of Coleridge to Allsop of March 20th this year, that the Lambs had dined with Coleridge the preceding Sunday (as they

[1] [The estrangement between Lamb and Coleridge through Lloyd is explained by Allsop to have arisen from Lloyd having shown Lamb a letter, in which Coleridge had drawn a somewhat invidious distinction between Lamb's genius and his own. A reconciliation took place, and Lamb wrote the verses "On the Old Familiar Faces."]

[2] [But Lamb more than once complains of Coleridge coming down to see them only when the meal at Gilman's was on the table—even in a recent letter to Wordsworth; and indeed the expression of Coleridge, quoted just beneath, of "*half-an-hour's* interesting conversation," seems to lend some force to Lamb's discontent.]

[3] A sonnet in "Blackwood," dated Manchester, and signed C. L.

rather frequently did about this time), and the writer adds :—"When I next see you, that excellent brother and sister will supply me with half-an-hour's interesting conversation. When you know the *whole* of him, you will love him in spite of all his oddities and even faults—nay, I had almost said, *for* them ; *at least*, admire that under his visitations they were so few and of so little importance. Thank God ! his circumstances are comfortable ; and so they ought, for he has been in the India House since his fourteenth year."

It was while Lamb was at No. 20, Russell Street, and during 1820 and 1821, that a succession of notes to Allsop was written, principally acknowledgments of game, or invitations to come, or both. The latest finds the brother and sister preparing to start for Cambridge, where they had arranged to spend the vacation this year. It seemed better to print the series consecutively. In his invaluable Diary,[1] Crabb Robinson writes :—

"July 20th [1820].—I had nothing to do to-day, and therefore had leisure to accompany Lamb and his sister on a walk behind the colleges. All Lamb's enjoyments are so pure and so hearty, that it is an enjoyment to see him enjoy. We walked about the exquisite chapel and the gardens of Trinity."

"Dear Sir,—We are most sorry to have missed you twice. We are at home to-night, to-morrow, & Thursday, & should be happy to see you any of these nights. Thanks for the shining bird. "Yours truly, "C. L."

"Dear Sir,—The hairs of our head are numbered ; but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks ; but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage. "Yours gratefully,
"C. L."

"Dear Sir,—Your hare arrived in excellent order Last night, and I hope will prove the precursor of yourself on Sunday.

[1] [Ed. 1869, ii. 165.]

"Why you should think it necessary to appease us with so many pleasant presents, I know not.

"More acknowledgments when we meet; we dine at 3.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"Thursday."

"My dear Sir,—We shall hope to see you to-morrow evening to a rubber. Thanks for your very kind letter and intentions respecting a bird.

"Yours very truly, "C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

"Dear Sir,—We expected you here to-night; but as you have invited us to-morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by 8, and shall have taken Tea.

"Your (not obliging but oblidged)

"C. & M. LAMB.

"Monday, 10th."

"Dear Sir,—I have brought you Rosamund Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"Tuesday evening, 15th Feb., 1820."

"Dear Sir,—We expect Wordsworth to-morrow evening. Will you look in? "C. L.

"Russell House, Thursday [17 Feb. 1820]."

"Dear Sir,—Wordsworth is with us this Even. Can you come? We leave Cov. Gard. on Thursday for some time.[1] "C. L."

[1] [I have noticed that the Lambs spent their 1820 vacation at Cambridge; but meanwhile they occasionally occupied the lodgings at Kingsland Row, Dalston, near Newington, to which they had been in the habit of resorting since 1815, perhaps through the recommendation of the Novellos, who resided at Shacklewell. During the spring of 1820, as well as that of the ensuing year, they spent from Saturday till Monday there sometimes, and they started thence in the beginning of July, 1820, for Cambridge, to remain away a month. Miss Lamb dates a letter to Mrs. Novello from Newington, and states that it was a complete novelty to be from home in the spring. I have arranged these notes as carefully as I can by this light; but they are very perplexing.]

"Dear Sir,—We have arranged to be into the country Saturday & Sunday, having made an engagement to that effect. Pray let us see you on Thursday at Russell House.

"With regrets & all proper feelings,

"Yours truly, "C. L."

[Early in July, 1820.]

"Dear Sir,—Thanks for the Birds and your kindness. It was but yesterday I was contriving with Talfourd to meet you ½ way at his chamber. But night don't do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by Eight.

"I will pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at one always, but I can spend an hour with you after that. Would Saturday serve?

"Yours truly, "C. L."

Ecce iterum:

"Dear Sir,—I fear I was obscure. I was plaguily busy when those tempting birds came. I meant to say I could not come this evening: but any other, if I can know a day before, I can come for 2 or 3 afternoon hours, from ¼ four to ½ past 6. At present I cannot command more furlough. I have nam'd Saturd. I will come, if you don't countermand. I shall have dined. I have been wanting not not to see you. "C. L."

[Early in July, 1820.]

"Dear Sir,—I do not know whose fault it is we have not met so long. We are almost always out of town. You must come & beat up our quarters there, when we return from Cambridge. It is not in our power to accept your invitation. To-day we dine out; and set out for Cambridge on Saturday morning. Friday of course will be past in packing, &c.; moreover we go from Dalston. We return from Cam. in 4 weeks, & will contrive an early meeting. Meantime believe us,

"Sincerely yours, "C. L., &c.

"Thursday."

After their return home, Allsop called at Russell Street, but found that they were at their suburban retreat at Dalston.

"Dear Sir,—I hear that you have called in Russell St. I cannot say when I shall be in town. When I am, I must see you; I had hoped to have seen you at Dalston, but my Sister is taken ill, & I am afraid will not be able to see any of her friends for a long time.

"Believe me, yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"India House."

"Dear Sir,—You shall see us on Thursday, with M[artin] B[urney], if possible, about 8. We shall have Teaed.

"Yours truly, "C. L.

"M. B.'s direction is 26, James Street, Westminster—James, not St. James, Street."

"My dear Sir,—If you can come next Sunday we shall be equally glad to see you, but do not trust to any of Martin's appointments, except on business, in future. He is notoriously faithless in that point, and we did wrong not to have warned you. Leg of Lamb, as before, hot at 4. And the heart of Lamb ever. Yours truly, "C. L.

"30th March, 1821."

BOOK IV.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN 1821 AND 1834.

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CHAPTER I.

LETTERS TO COLERIDGE, COLLIER, LEIGH HUNT, ALLSOP, GODWIN, WORDSWORTH, AND HAYDON—GODWIN'S DIFFICULTIES —VISIT OF THE LAMBS TO PARIS.

[1821-2.]

[CHARLES MATHEWS, whom we have now to call *the Elder*, had come to reside at Highgate Hill, toward Kentish Town, in 1819; but it was not till two years later that he and his wife first met the Lambs at the Gilmans'. "It was at last arranged," writes Mrs. Mathews, "that we should dine on the fifth of May in this year at Mr. and Mrs. Gilman's . . . in order to meet this charming person and his amiable sister." The following notes to Coleridge and Gilman illustrate this episode. The postscript of the former seems to explain Lamb's allusion in the letter to Gilman to "a dying man"—a man who was dying in 1807, and not dead yet! It does not seem as if the writer's feelings towards the host and hostess of his friend ever went beyond respect. He spoke of Mrs. Gilman as "the striking lady *with the ebony tips*."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.[1]

"May 1st, 1821.

"Dr. C.—I will not fail you on Friday by six, and Mary, perhaps, earlier. I very much wish to meet Charles Mathews, and am very much obliged to the Gilmans for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them always.

"ELIA."

Extract from a MS. note of S. T. C. in my Beaumont and Fletcher, dated April 17th, 1807 :

"Midnight.

"God bless you, my dear Charles Lamb; I am dying; I feel I have not many weeks left."[2]

TO MR. GILMAN.[3]

"Wednesday, 2nd May, '21.

"Dear Sir,—You dine so late on Friday, it will be impossible for us to go home by the eight o'clock stage. Will you oblige me by securing us beds in some house from which a stage goes to the Bank in the morning? I would write to Coleridge, but cannot think of troubling a dying man with such a request. Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"If the beds in the town are all engaged, in consequence of Mr. Mathews's appearance,[4] a hackney coach will serve.

"We shall neither of us come much before the time."[5]

[1] ["Memoirs of C. Mathews," by Mrs. Mathews, 1839, iii. 191.]

[2] [This almost amounted to an idiosyncrasy on Coleridge's part. No doubt his health was delicate. He was very ill in the early part of 1801; and in a letter of 1808 to Lamb, he says, "O, Charles, I am very, very ill. *Vixi.*"]

[3] ["Memoirs of C. Mathews," iii., 192-3.]

[4] [An "At Home," which Mathews was to give in the neighbourhood.]

[5] [They were the last to arrive. Mrs. Mathews says: "My husband, who was punctuality itself, and all the little party, except the Elia and his sister, were assembled. At last, Mr. and Miss Lamb appeared, and Mr. Coleridge led his friend up to my husband with a look, which seemed to say, 'I pray you, like this fellow.'" For a description of Lamb's dress and aspect, I must refer to the book.]

[Presents of books and every other description of thing began to flow in from friends, new and old. Mr. J. P. Collier sent his "Poetical Decameron,"[1] and was repaid by this letter, written from the lodging at Dalston, to which the brother and sister now occasionally retired for the sake of quiet :—

TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER.[2]

[Kingsland Row, Dalston], May 16th, 1821.

"Dear J. P. C.,—Many thanks for the 'Decameron:' I have not such a gentleman's book in my collection: it was a great treat to me, and I got it just as I was wanting something of the sort. I take less pleasure in books than heretofore, but I like books about books. In the second volume, in particular, are treasures—your discoveries about 'Twelfth Night,' etc. What a Shakespearian essence that speech of Osrades for food!—Shakespeare is coarse to it—beginning 'Forbear and eat no more.' Osrades warms up to that, but does not set out ruffian-swaggerer. The character of the Ass with those three lines, worthy to be set in gilt vellum, and worn in frontlets by the noble beasts for ever—

> "'Thou would, perhaps, he should become thy foe,
> And to that end dost beat him many times:
> He cares not for himself, much less thy blow.'

Cervantes, Sterne, and Coleridge, have said positively nothing for asses compared with this.

"I write in haste; but p. 24, vol. i., the line you cannot appropriate is Gray's sonnet, specimenifyed by Wordsworth in first preface to L. B., as mixed of bad and good style: p. 143, 2nd vol., you will find last poem but one of the collection on Sidney's death in Spenser, the line,

> 'Scipio, Cæsar, Petrarch of our time.'

[1] ["The Poetical Decameron; or, Ten Conversations on English Poets and Poetry," 1820, 2 vols., small 8vo.]

[2] [Collier's "Old Man's Diary," part 4, pp. 85-6. In the "Works of Lamb," 1876, p. 520, is a paper entitled, "The Ass," founded on a notice by Collier, in the "Decameron," of an Elizabethan book (translated from Heinsius) called "The Nobleness of the Ass," 1595.]

This fixes it to be Raleigh's: I had guess'd it to be Daniel's. The last after it, 'Silence augmenteth rage,' I will be crucified if it be not Lord Brooke's. Hang you, and all meddling researchers, hereafter, that by raking into learned dust may find me out wrong in my conjecture!

"Dear J. P. C., I shall take the first opportunity of personally thanking you for my entertainment. We are at Dalston for the most part, but I fully hope for an evening soon with you in Russell or Bouverie Street, to talk over old times and books. Remember *us* kindly to Mrs. J. P. C.

"Yours very kindly,

"CHARLES LAMB.

"I write in misery.

"N.B.—The best pen I could borrow at our butcher's: the ink, I verily believe, came out of the kennel."]

It was at this time that Lamb formed an acquaintance with a man, who was not less remarkable for the probity and uprightness of his character and the soundness and far-sightedness of his political views than for his varied and high attainments—WILLIAM HONE, who, in the face of the strongest official opposition and public prejudice, defeated the attempt to commit him to gaol for his political Parodies. His trial before Lord Ellenborough was brought to a climax by the defendant offering to hand up to the Bench a similar production, composed by Ellenborough's father, the Bishop of Carlisle. Lamb materially aided Hone by his encouragement and by his contributions to the "Table Book." The correspondence begins in 1821 with a note dated November 9th, where Lamb observes of graces—a subject he himself took up in one of his Essays: "Our Hebrew brethren seem to appreciate the good things of this life in more liberal latitude than we, to judge from their frequent graces. One, I think, you must have omitted—'After concluding a bargain.' Their distinction of fruits growing upon trees and upon the ground I can understand. A sow makes quite a different grunt (*her grace*) over chestnuts and pignuts."

An interesting account of the comparatively early acquaintance between Leigh Hunt and Lamb occurs in Hunt's "Autobiography," where the writer gratefully re-

cords the visits of the brother and sister to him in prison between 1813 and 1815. Hunt says: "The Lambs came to comfort me in all weathers—hail or sunshine, in daylight or in darkness, even in the dreadful frost and snow of the beginning of 1814;" and under 1816 I have inserted an account of the copy of "Rimini," which was received and acknowledged by Lamb. But they did not see much of each other subsequently to Hunt's release; and Mr. Charles Cowden Clarke, who had introduced himself to Hunt at Horsemonger Lane with presents of fruit, and to Lamb during his visit to Margate in 1817, now wrote to the latter to complain of his neglect of Hunt, to which the subjoined letter is a reply.

TO C. COWDEN CLARKE.[1]

[1821.]

"My dear Sir,—Your letter has lain in a draw[er] of my desk, upbraiding me every time I open the said draw[er], but it is almost impossible to answer such a letter in such a place, and I am out of the habit of replying to epistles otherwhere than at office. You express yourself concerning Hunt like a true friend, and have made me feel that I have somehow neglected him, but without knowing very well how to rectify it. I live so remote from him —by Hackney—that he is almost out of the pale of visitation at Hampstead. And I come but seldom to Covt. Gardn. this summer time, and when I do, am sure to pay for the late hours and pleasant Novello suppers which I incur. I also am an invalid. But I will hit upon some way, that you shall not have cause for your reproof in future. But do not think I take the hint unkindly. When I shall be brought low by any sickness or untoward circumstance, write just such a letter to some tardy friend of mine—or come up yourself with your friendly Henshaw face—and

[1] [Addressed, V. Novello, Esq., for C. C. Clarke, Esq. The latter, son of a schoolmaster at Enfield, introduced Keats to Leigh Hunt. Keats had been educated at Mr. Clarke's. These letters to C. C. Clarke and Novello were first printed in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for Oct., 1873, and Messrs. Chatto and Windus most liberally gave the editor their permission to use them.]

that will be better. I shall not forget in haste our casual day at Margate. May we have many such there or elsewhere! God bless you for your kindness to H., which I will remember. But do not show Novello this, for the flouting infidel doth mock when Christians cry God bless us. Yours and *his, too*, and all our little circle's most affect^e^. "C. LAMB.

"Mary's love included."

The next is the second of the short series, so far as we are yet permitted to know, to the author of "Rimini." It arose possibly out of the friendly remonstrance from Mr. Cowden Clarke, which produced Lamb's letter to him just given. The Hunts started for Italy in the beginning of December, 1821; and in the postscript of a letter to the Novellos, of December 24th, from Dartmouth, Leigh Hunt begs to be remembered to the Lambs; and in one to Mary Novello, of March 26th, 1822, from Stonehouse, near Plymouth (for they had not yet left England), he shews that the old friendly sentiments were unchanged. "Remember me," he says, "affectionately to the Lambs. There are no Lambs here, nor Martin Burneys neither." The last that we hear of Lamb in Hunt's volumes is in a letter from Genoa of 1822.

TO LEIGH HUNT.

"Indifferent Wednesday, 1821.

"Dear Hunt,—There was a sort of side-talk at Mr. Novello's about our spending *Good Friday* at Hampstead; but my sister has got so bad a cold, and we both want rest so much, that you shall excuse our putting off the visit some little time longer. Perhaps, after all, you know nothing of it. "Believe me, yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

We have introduced the name of Mr. Allsop to notice in connection with some antecedent letters. He now became famous above all other of Elia's circle for his munificence in gifts—not of books or prints, but game and hares. These

presents from him were of very frequent occurrence. In a letter written from the India House, October 19th, 1821, Lamb thanks him for a hare, and takes it for granted that it must have been he or *Mr. Talfourd* who sent it, as the account given with it was that it came from *Mr. Alfourd*. So he proposed that the two gentlemen should divide the credit between them, and he adds: "We are, and shall be some time, at Dalston, a distance which does not improve hares by the circuitous route of Covent Garden." He spoke of his sister as still ill, but hoped when she was better, he would see Mr. Allsop again. "I shall have great pleasure in welcoming you from Beresford Hall;" and he signs himself, "Yours and old Mr. Walton's, and honest Mr. Cotton's, Piscatorum Amicus, C. L."

The following letter, containing the germ of the well-known "Dissertation on Roast Pig,"[1] was addressed to Coleridge, who had received a pig as a present, and attributed it erroneously to Lamb.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"March 9th, 1822.

"Dear C.,—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well[2]—they are interesting creatures at a certain age—what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no cursed complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went

[1] [But see what I say in my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, pp. 157-8, where a facsimile page of the essay is given.]

[2] [Compare a letter of 1823 to Mr. and Mrs. Bruton, *post*.]

round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, wigeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity—there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child—my kind old aunt[1] had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts—a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and in the coxcombry of taught-charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me—the sum it was to her—the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake—the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

"But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

"Yours (short of pig) to command in everything.

"C. L."[2]

[1] [Aunt Hetty.]

[2] [See a letter from Coleridge to Allsop, March 22nd, 1822 (ed. 1864, p. 180).]

The deaths of his Brother John, which he felt much—more possibly from having seen so little of him, and of Admiral [1] Burney, cast a melancholy tinge on his mind, as may be seen in the following:—

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.[2]

"March 20th, 1822.

"My dear Wordsworth,—A letter from you is very grateful; I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well, save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to everything, which I think I may date from poor John's loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that has made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths overset one, and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within this last two twelvemonths, and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other: the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for another. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Capt. Burney gone! What fun has whist now? what matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears anything, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence—thus one distributes oneself about—and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points, and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It

[1] [Lamb calls him *Captain;* it is, perhaps, immaterial. But he was gazetted an admiral two or three weeks before his death.]

[2] [Miss Wordsworth, writing to H. C. Robinson, under date of March 3rd, 1822 (Robinson's "Diary," 1869, ii., 225), says:—"My brother will, I hope, write to Charles Lamb in the course of a few days. He has long talked of doing it; but you know how the mastery of his own thoughts (when engaged in composition, as he has lately been) often prevents him from fulfilling his best intentions."]

takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A dies. B. not only loses A.; but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life; but my practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. Oh for a few years between the grave and the desk! they are the same, save that at the latter you are the outside machine. The foul enchanter [Nick?]—'letters four do form his name'—Busirane is his name in hell—that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in the taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry—*Otium cum indignitate*. I had thought in a green old age (Oh green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End, emblematic name, how beautiful! in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with Heaven and the Company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt, anon stretching, on some fine Izaak Walton morning, to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs—dying walking! The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. *Vide* Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the War-office. (Debates this morning's 'Times,') by which it appears, in twenty years as many clerks have been coughed and catarrhed out of it into their freer graves. Thank you for asking about the pictures.[1] Milton hangs over my fire-side in Covent Garden; (when I am there,) the rest have been

[1] [His brother's collection. It was dispersed, with the exception of the Milton.]

sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off! You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd.[1] For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy; but our chief-reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-Eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea, you know, of authors; but I believe on my part sincere. Hartley I do not so often see; but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him. I send you a frozen epistle; but it is winter and dead time of the year with me. May Heaven keep something like spring and summer up with you, strengthen your eyes, and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed!

"Yours, with every kind remembrance. "C. L.

"I had almost forgot to say, I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. Hang me, but I would have it, though!"

The business of Godwin in Skinner Street was, meanwhile, something like a failure, and the proprietor was in a serious financial dilemma. Immediate help was needed and obtained. The note, which I print here, is more eloquent, looking at the resources of the writer, than any criticism which could be offered upon it.

TO WILLIAM GODWIN.

"May 16th, 1822.

"Dear Godwin —I sincerely feel for all your trouble. Pray use the enclosed £50, and pay me when you can. I shall make it my business to see you very shortly.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB."

[1] See the account of the meeting between Dodd and Jem White, in Elia's Essay, "On some of the Old Actors," in the "London Magazine" for February, 1822, or in "Elia," 1823, p. 302.

[Crabb Robinson, in his "Diary,"[1] has this entry:—"June 17th [1822].—I went to call on the Lambs and take leave, they setting out for France next morning. I gave Miss Lamb a letter for Miss Williams, to whom I sent a copy of 'Mrs. Leicester's School.' The Lambs have a Frenchman as their companion, and Miss Lamb's nurse, in case she should be ill. Lamb was in high spirits; his sister rather nervous. Her courage in going is great." The travellers proceeded by way of Calais and Amiens, where Miss Lamb was seized by one of her ordinary attacks, and where they providentially fell in with some friends, who procured help.[2]

Paris was at that moment full of English people of note. There were Moore, Horace Smith and his wife, Washington Irving, John Howard Payne, and Mrs. Shelley, and, at Versailles, the Kenneys. Lamb and his sister seem to have put up, if not at first, at all events after a while, at Kenney's. They saw a good deal of Paris, and met Talma. On the expiration of the month's holiday, Miss Lamb was not thought yet strong enough to venture on so long a journey, and remained behind with her nurse, Miss James, at the Kenneys', her brother returning alone; so that the trip proved in the long run uncomfortable enough. Before his departure, in anticipation of his sister's complete recovery, he left some written directions as to what she was to see before she came home.[3] "Then you must walk," he says, "all along the Borough[4] side of the Seine, facing the Tuileries. There is a mile and a half of printshops and bookstalls. If the latter were but English! Then there is a place where the Paris people put all the dead people, and bring them flowers and dolls, and gingerbread nuts, and sonnets, and such trifles; and that is all, I think, worth seeing as sights, except that the streets and shops of Paris are themselves the best sight."

It is to be inferred that Miss Lamb stayed some little

[1] [Ed. 1869, ii., 233.]

[2] ["Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 199.]

[3] [Robinson's "Diary," 1869, ii. 235.]

[4] [How true to his associations as a Londoner, and to what he knew would be his sister's train of ideas, is this transfer of local topography to a foreign place somewhat analogously situated!]

time with the Kenneys, under the care of Miss James, with whom she returned to England. At Dieppe she found Mr. Kenney; for, in a letter to his wife, written after his return, she says: "When I met Mr. Kenney there, I sadly repented that I had not dragged you on to Dieppe with me. What a pleasant time we should have spent there!" A little before the conclusion of the same letter, Miss Lamb exclaims: "Oh, the dear, lonely, dreary Boulevards! How I do wish to be just now stepping out of a cuckoo into them!" It may be requisite to explain that a *cou-cou* was a small diligence, which used to ply in those days between the Champs Elysées and Saint Cloud or Versailles; it took its name from the fact, probably, that it was only a summer service.

Moore had taken offence because Lamb did not call upon him while he was in Paris. In a letter to Kenney, written after his return, he explains the matter. Moore and Lamb subsequently met each other at dinner.]

CHAPTER II.

KNOWLES AND MACREADY—GODWIN'S DIFFICULTIES AGAIN—LAMB AND SIR WALTER SCOTT—LETTERS TO CLARE AND HAYDON, MISS WORDSWORTH AND ALLSOP—FORMATION OF AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH BERNARD BARTON—LETTERS TO HIM AND HOWARD PAYNE.

[1822.]

THE widening circle of Lamb's literary friends now embraced additional authors and actors,—famous, or just bursting into fame. He welcomed in the author of the "Dramatic Scenes," who chose to appear in print as Barry Cornwall, a spirit most congenial with his own in its serious moods,—one whose genius he had assisted to impel towards its kindred models, the great dramatists of Elizabeth's time, and in whose success he received the first and best reward of the efforts he had made to inspire a taste for these old masters of humanity. Mr. Macready, who had just emancipated himself from the drudgery of representing the villains of tragedy by his splendid performance of "Richard," was introduced to him by his old friend Charles Lloyd, who had visited London for change of scene, under great depression of spirits. Lloyd owed a debt of gratitude to Macready, which exemplified the true uses of the acted drama with a force which it would take many sermons of its stoutest opponents to reason away. A deep gloom had gradually overcast his mind, and threatened wholly to encircle it, when he was induced to look in at Covent-Garden Theatre, and witness the performance of "Rob Roy." The picture which he then beheld of the generous outlaw,—the frank, gallant, noble bearing,—the air and movements, as of one "free of mountain solitudes,"—the touches of manly pathos and irresistible cordiality, delighted and melted him, won him from his painful introspections, and brought to him the unwonted relief of tears. He went home "a *gayer* and a wiser man," returned again

to the theatre, whenever the healing enjoyments could be renewed there, and sought the acquaintance of the actor who had broken the melancholy spell in which he was enthralled, and had restored the pulses of his nature to their healthful beatings. The year 1820 gave Lamb an interest in Macready beyond that which he had derived from the introduction of Lloyd, arising from the power with which he animated the first production of one of his oldest friends—"Virginius." Knowles had been a friend and disciple of Hazlitt from a boy; and Lamb had liked and esteemed him as a hearty companion; but he had not guessed at the extraordinary dramatic power which lay ready for kindling in his brain, and still less at the delicacy of tact with which he had unveiled the sources of the most profound affections. Lamb had almost lost his taste for acted tragedy, as the sad realities of life had pressed more nearly on him; yet he made an exception in favour of the first and happiest part of "Virginius"—those paternal scenes, which stand alone in the modern drama, and which Macready informed with the fulness of a father's affection.

A gift from Mr. John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant poet, of whom such singular anecdotes used to be told, of his little volume of verses, containing the "Village Minstrel and other Poems," 1821, was promptly and kindly acknowledged.

TO JOHN CLARE.[1]

"India House, 31st Aug. 1822.

"Dear Clare,—I thank you heartily for your present. I am an inveterate old Londoner, but while I am among your choice collections I seem to be native to them and free of the country. The quality of your observation has astonished me. What have most pleased me have been 'Recollections after a Ramble,' and those 'Grengar Hill' kind of pieces in eight syllable lines, my favourite measure, such as 'Cowper Hill' and 'Solitude.' In some of your story-telling Ballads the provincial phrases sometimes startle me.

[1] [Egerton MS. B. M. 2246, fol. 99, orig. In 1823, Mr. Allen printed "Four Letters on Clare's Poems." See for some account of this correspondent, Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866, p. 160.]

I think you are too profuse with them. In poetry *slang* of every kind is to be avoided. There is a rustick Cockneyism, as little pleasing as ours of London. Transplant Arcadia to Helpstone. The true rustic style I think is to be found in Shenstone. Would his 'Schoolmistress,' the prettiest of poems, have been better if he had used quite the Goody's own language? Now and then a home rusticism is fresh and startling; but when nothing is gained in expression, it is out of tenor. It may make folks smile and stare; but the ungenial coalition of barbarous with refined phrases will prevent you in the end from being so generally tasted, as you desire to be. Excuse my freedom, and take the same liberty with my *puns*.

"I send you two little volumes of my spare hours. They are of all sorts: there is a Methodist hymn for Sundays and a farce for Saturday night. Pray give them a place on your shelf. Pray accept a little volume, of which I have a duplicate, that I may return in equal number to your welcome presents. I think I am indebted to you for a sonnet in the 'London' for August?[1]

"Since I saw you I have been in France, and have eaten frogs. The nicest little rabbity things you ever tasted. Do look about for them. Make Mrs. Clare pick off the hind quarters, boil them plain, with parsley and butter, The fore quarters are not so good. She may let them hop off by themselves. "Yours sincerely,

"CHAS. LAMB."

[Addressed at back]

"Mr. John Clare."

Once more, Mr. John Taylor, of the house of Taylor and Hessey, enclosed to Lamb a copy of verses by *Olen*, and in acknowledgment Lamb told Mr. Taylor that "he would do him injustice, if he did not convey to the writer of the beautiful lines, which he returned him, his sense of the extreme kindness which dictated them. Poor Elia (call him Ellia)," says he, "does not pretend to so very clear revela-

[1] ["London Magazine" for August, 1822, p. 157. The sonnet is anonymous; but in the publishers' copy of the Magazine, of which Archdeacon Hessey lately gave me the set, Clare's name is inserted in MS.]

tions of a future state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like. His *animus* at best (whatever become of it in the female termination) hath always been *cum Christianis*." He guessed the writer to be Montgomery, and spoke of the pleasure he should feel in making his acquaintance.

But if Lamb took from his friends their books and their game, and other superfluous whatnots, he gave, too, freely enough—nay, nobly—more, indeed, than will ever be disclosed. The state of Mr. Godwin's pecuniary affairs had reached a climax in 1822; his premises and effects in Skinner Street—everything that he possessed—was in imminent danger of seizure, when Lamb, to whom he had appealed, wrote to Haydon the painter, and enlisted the sympathy and support of many of his friends to save Godwin from ruin. But as the matter pressed, and the correspondence was likely to lead to delay, Lamb himself had, as we have seen, come forward in the spring of the year, and furnished Godwin with the means of entering into some provisional compromise with his creditors.

We now return to the negotiations in regard to Godwin. Lamb had sent the latter money in May last as a temporary relief; but the difficulty was not overcome, and in the autumn Lamb communicated with Haydon in the hope to secure for his old friend some substantial aid in other quarters.

TO B. R. HAYDON.[1]

"India House, 19th October, 1822.

"Dear Haydon,—Poor Godwin has been turned out of his house and business in Skinner Street, and if he does not pay two years' arrears of rent, he will have the whole stock, furniture, &c., of his new house (in the Strand) seized when term begins. We are trying to raise a subscription for

[1] ["Haydon's Correspondence," by Sadler, i. 355-6.]

him. My object in writing this is simply to ask you, if this is a kind of case which would be likely to interest Mrs. Coutts in his behalf, and *who*, in your opinion, is the best person to speak with her on his behalf. Without the aid of from £300 to £400 by that time, early in November, he will be ruined. You are the only person I can think of, of his acquaintance, and can perhaps, if not yourself, recommend the person most likely to influence her. Shelley had engaged to clear him of all demands, and he has gone down to the deep insolvent. "Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Is Sir Walter to be applied to, and by what channel?"

It seems that Haydon hereupon wrote to Sir Walter Scott, and advised Lamb to do the same, which he at once did, letting Haydon know in the following short note, which also refers to some engagement at the Haydons':—

TO B. R. HAYDON.[1]

"Tuesday, 29th [October, 1822.]

"Dear H.—I have written a very respectful letter to Sir W. S.[2] Godwin did not write, because he leaves all to his Committee, as I will explain to you. If this rascally weather holds you will see but one of us on that day.

"Yours, with many thanks,

"CHARLES LAMB."

Sir Walter Scott does not appear to have written to Lamb in reply to his letter; but he wrote to Haydon in a tone which reflected on him the highest honour. The references to Lamb are very curious, particularly the invitation to Abbotsford:—"I am much obliged to Mr. Lamb and you for giving me an opportunity of contributing my mite to the relief of Mr. Godwin, whose distresses I sincerely commiserate. I enclose a cheque for £10, which I beg Mr. Lamb will have the kindness to apply as he judges best in

[1] "Haydon's Correspondence," 1876, i. 355.]
[2] [*Ibid.*, i. 356.]

this case. I should not wish my name to be made public as a subscriber (supposing publicity to be given to the matter at all), because I dissent from Mr. Godwin's theory of politics and morality as sincerely as I admire his genius . . . . . I beg my respects to Mr. Lamb, whom I should be happy to see in Scotland, though I have not forgotten his metropolitan preference of houses to rocks, and citizens to wild rustics and highland men."

In the Forster Collection at South Kensington is the Memorial of the Committee, dated from Albemarle Street, on behalf of Godwin. Among the signatories are John Murray, W. Ayrton, Sir James Mackintosh, Charles Lamb, and Lord Dudley. The amount realized, however, was only, so far as I can see, about £150, of which Lamb and Dudley contributed £100, £50 each, the former having advanced his share in the spring, when it was probably most valuable.

There is, of course, no reference to this matter in Lockhart. In a letter to Barton, March 20th, 1826, Lamb seems to refer to his letter to Scott, where he says, "Once only I sealed with borrowed wax, to set Walter Scott a wondering, signed with the imperial quartered arms of England, which my friend Field gives, in compliment to his descent, in the female line, from Oliver Cromwell." The notion tickled Lamb's fancy, for he reverts to it more than once.

The following letter is addressed to Trinity College, Cambridge, when Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Dr. Wordsworth.

"TO MISS WORDSWORTH.

"Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for your fair niece's sake.

"Christmas, 1822.

"Dear Miss Wordsworth,—I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. Monkhouse, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tor-

mented with a rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcase holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy[1] shall be welcome to a mince-pie, and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations; everybody likes them, except the author of the 'Pleasures of Hope.' Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge: a portrait of Cromwell at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red) at Dr. Davy's; you should see them. Coleridge is pretty well; I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be 'when winter bleak had charms for me.' I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

"Mrs. Paris,[2] our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the Watfords in Trumpington Street. They are capital people. Ask anybody you meet who is the biggest woman in Cambridge,[3] and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith; she broke down two benches in Trinity gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the Societies as to repairing it. In warm weather, she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!), and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room

[1] [William Minor. See the letter to his father of Nov. 25, 1819.]

[2] [Compare the letter to Ayrton, of March 14th, 1830, *infrâ*. I collect that Mrs. Paris was sister to Ayrton, and that it was at her house that Lamb first met Emma Isola.]

[3] [But compare the paper entitled, "The Gentle Giantess" (reprinted from the "London Magazine") in "Eliana," where the scene is laid in the sister University, and the Widow Blacket figures as the biggest female whom Lamb remembered to have encountered.]

with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends tooth-aches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at ten cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

"Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary for not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter? "C. L."

Internal testimony appears to fix the two following notes to Allsop, who is now addressed in more familiar wise, between Christmas, 1822, and the following month. The Lambs were on the point, in the first, of removing once more from Russell Street to Dalston, in search of change and rest.

"Dear Allsop,—We are going to Dalston on Wednesday. Will you come see the last of us to-morrow night—you and Mrs. Allsop?

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"Monday Evening."

"Dear Allsop,—Your pheasant is glittering, but your company will be more acceptable this evening. Wordsworth is not with us, but the next things to him are.

"C. LAMB.

"Monday Evening."

Here is a reminiscence of the trip to Paris.

TO JAMES KENNEY.[1]

[1822.]

"Dear Kenney,—The £30 Draft I shall receive in January. When I have received that, I shall consider our

[1] [Now first printed. It is written on the last page of a quarto sheet, the remaining sides being occupied by a letter from Miss Lamb to Mrs. Kenney. But across the concluding side there is a message to Mrs. Kenney, in the handwriting of Fanny Kelly, the actress, who played in Kenney's "Touchstone" at Drury Lane in 1817. This curious tripartite production appears to have returned to the light of day from a

account as quite cleared. I cannot rake into transactions between Mrs. Kenney and Miss James. Mrs. Kenney's services I owe her for still, and Payne's [1] I should be happy to return. Harwood [2] brings this. If the amount due to me in January will retard his fitting out, you may have a longer day. . . . But rub out of your brain any further items; that all goes into my Paris expences. As to Moore, I do not remember any coquetry about it; I readily agreed to meet him at H. Smith's.[3] The illness of Mrs. S., which prevented it, was not of my inflicting. I had made a hit at him in the 'London' in his name of Little; and, though I should have been happy to have met him, that surely was reason sufficient not to volunteer a visit to him. It has been my regret that I missed him.

"Adieu (a dry letter). "C. L.

"Love to Louisa, Ellen, and all."

Soon after Lamb's return from Paris he became acquainted with the poet of the Quakers, Bernard Barton who, like himself, was engaged in the drudgery of figures, [and to whom Lamb, perhaps half-unconsciously, was drawn in an especial manner by the community of unwelcome toil.] The pure and gentle tone of the poems of his new acquaintance was welcome to Lamb, who had more sympathy with the truth of nature in modest guise than in the affected fury of Lord Byron or the dreamy extravagancies of Shelley. Lamb had written in "Elia" of the Society of Friends with the freedom of one who, with great respect for the principles of the founders of their faith, had little in common with a sect who shunned the pleasures while they mingled in the business of the world; and a friendly expostulation on the part of Mr. Barton led to such cordial excuses as completely won the heart of the

cellar, where other autographs are said to be living in retirement. It has been my fortune to know or hear of persons who found lodgings for their old papers in the cellar, the scullery sink, and the kitchen oven. The Lambs and Kenneys became known to each other, doubtless, through the old friendship with Holcroft. Kenney christened his younger son *Charles Lamb Kenney*.]

[1] [Mr. John Howard Payne, who will occur again.]

[2] [Harwood Holcroft.]

[3] [Compare Robinson's "Diary," 1869, ii., 248.]

Quaker bard. Some expression which Lamb let fall at their meeting in London, from which Mr. Barton had supposed that Lamb objected to a Quaker's writing poetry as inconsistent with his creed, induced Mr. Barton to write to Lamb on his return to Woodbridge, who replied as follows :—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"India House, 11th Sept. 1822.

"Dear Sir,—You have misapprehended me sadly if you suppose that I meant to impute any inconsistency in your writing poetry with your religious profession. I do not remember what I said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure—one of my levities, which you are not so used to as my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to Quakers, and put their objection in my own foolish mouth. I would eat my words (provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation.

"I have read 'Napoleon' and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are, and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade and Byronism; and your plain Quakerish beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates, ay, and toothsome too, and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox licenser of the press, they should have my absolute *imprimatur*. I hope I have removed the impression.

"I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years—a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no imaginative poet, I am sure I am a figurative one. Do 'Friends' allow puns? *verbal* equivocations?—they are unjustly accused of it, and I did my little best in the 'Imperfect Sympathies' to vindicate them. I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a Sonnet to this purpose in the Examiner?—

> 'Who first invented work, and bound the free
> And holy-day rejoicing spirit down
> To the ever-haunting importunity
> Of business, in the green fields and the town,

To plough, loom, anvil, spade; and oh, most sad,
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
Who but the being unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
Task ever plies, 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel;
For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel
In that red realm from which are no returnings;
Where, toiling and turmoiling, ever and aye,
He and his thoughts keep pensive working-day.'

"I fancy the sentiment exprest above will be nearly your own. The expression of it probably would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where, indeed, to find an exposition of your creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker. Believe me, with great respect, yours,

"C. LAMB.

"I shall always be happy to see or hear from you."

[The sight of Paris for the first (and last) time deeply impressed Lamb. He alludes to it in letters written two or three years afterwards. In one to Barron Field he gave a long account of his experiences, and referred to the death of poor Shelley, and to his friends Byron and Hunt. He also added to his correspondents a gentleman, whom he had met in the French capital, Mr. John Howard Payne, to whom he addressed the two letters below and others which will be found in their proper order.]

TO MR. BARRON FIELD.

"Sept. 22, 1822.

"My dear F.,—I scribble hastily at office. Frank wants my letter presently. I & sister are just returned from Paris!! We have eaten frogs. It has been such a treat! You know our monotonous general Tenor. Frogs are the nicest little delicate things—rabbity-flavoured. Imagine a Lilliputian rabbit! They fricassee them; but in my mind, drest seethed, plain, with parsley and butter, would have been the decision of Apicius. Shelley the great Atheist

has gone down by water to eternal fire![1] Hunt and his young fry are left stranded at Pisa, to be adopted by the remaining duumvir Lord Byron—his wife and 6 children & their maid. What a cargo of Jonases, if they had foundered too! The only use I can find of friends is that they do to borrow money of you. Henceforth I will consort with none but rich rogues. Paris is a glorious picturesque old City. London looks mean & New to it, as the town of Washington would, seen after *it*. But they have no St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run thro' a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (O the glorious antiques!): houses on the other. The Thames disunites London & Southwark. I had Talma to supper with me. He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspere. He paid a broker about £40 English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows—a lovely picture, corresponding with the Folio head. The bellows has old carved *wings* round it, and round the visnomy is inscribed, as near as I remember, not divided into rhyme—I found out the rhyme—

> 'Whom have we here
> Stuck on this bellows,
> But the Prince of good fellows,
> Willy Shakspere?'

At top—

> 'O base and coward luck!
> To be here stuck.
> POINS.'

At bottom—

> 'Nay! rather a glorious lot is to him assign'd,
> Who, like the Almighty, rides upon the *wind*.
> PISTOL.'

"This is all in old carved wooden letters. The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure,

[1] [This sounds like a semi-serious antithesis. But Lamb, although he said little about such matters, had certain religious convictions, and of a narrow type; and besides, there was always a feeling of soreness against Shelley for his association with a man who had attacked Lamb's special friends.]

even as he was immeasurable. It may be a forgery. They laugh at me and tell me Ireland is in Paris, and has been putting off a portrait of the Black Prince. How far old wood may be imitated I cannot say. Ireland was not found out by his parchments, but by his poetry. I am confident no painter on either side the Channel could have painted any thing near like the face I saw. Again, would such a painter and forger have taken £40 for a thing, if authentic, worth £4000? Talma is not in the secret, for he had not even found out the rhymes in the first inscription. He is coming over with it, and my life to Southey's Thalaba, it will gain universal faith.

"The letter is wanted, and I am wanted. Imagine the blank filled up with all kind things.

"Our joint hearty remembrances to both of you. Yours as ever, "C. LAMB."

We now enter upon the correspondence with Howard Payne on dramatic matters:—

TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE.[1]

"1822—Thursday.

"'Ali Pacha' will do. I sent my sister the first night, not having been able to go myself, and her report of its effect was most favourable. I saw it last night—the third night—and it was most satisfactorily received. I have been sadly disappointed in Talfourd, who does the critiques in the 'Times,' and who promised his strenuous services; but by some damn'd arrangement he was sent to the wrong house, and a most iniquitous account of 'Ali' substi-

[1] ["Century Magazine," October, 1882, p. 928, where the six other letters to Payne were first printed with some account of the writer, by Mr. R. S. Chilton. In the "Athenæum" for 1835 appears the subjoined gratifying intimation:—"The acting dramas of John Howard Paine have made their way in England, where they were written, and we need not speak of them. Probably there are not nine people in England who know the author is an American. He is of the old school of dramatic writers, and has been very successful. He returned to America lately, after an absence of many years, and was received with public honours."]

tuted for his, which I am sure would have been a kind one. The 'Morning Herald' did it ample justice, without appearing to puff it. It is an abominable misrepresentation of the 'Times,' that Farren played Ali like Lord Ogilby. He acted infirmity of body, but not of voice or purpose. His manner was even grand. A grand old gentleman. His falling to the earth when his son's death was announced was fine as anything I ever saw. It was as if he had been blasted. Miss Foote looked helpless and beautiful, and greatly helped the piece. It is going on steadily, I am sure, for *many nights*. Marry, I was a little disappointed with Hassan, who tells us he subsists by cracking court jests before Hali; but he made none. In all the rest, scenery and machinery, it was faultless. I hope it will bring you here. I should be most glad of that. I have a room for you, and you shall order your own dinner three days in the week. I must retain my own authority for the rest. As far as magazines go, I can answer for Talfourd in the 'New Monthly.' He cannot be put out there. But it is established as a favourite, and can do without these expletives. I long to talk over with you the Shakspeare Picture. My doubts of its being a forgery mainly rest upon the goodness of the picture. The bellows might be trumped up, but where did the painter spring from? Is Ireland a consummate artist—or any of Ireland's accomplices?—but we shall confer upon it, I hope. The 'New Times,' I understand was favorable to 'Ali,' but I have not seen it. I am sensible of the want of method in this letter, but I have been deprived of the connecting organ by a practice I have fallen into since I left Paris, of taking too much strong spirits of a night. I must return to the Hotel de l'Europe and Macon.

"How is Kenney? Have you seen my friend White? What is Poole about, &c.? Do not write, but come and answer me.

"The weather is charming, and there is a mermaid to be seen in London. You may not have the opportunity of inspecting such a *Poissarde* once again in ten centuries.

"My sister joins me in the hope of seeing you.

"Yours truly, "C. Lamb."

TO THE SAME.

"Wednsd., 13 Nov., '22

"Dear P.—Owing to the inconvenience of having two lodgings, I did not get your letter quite so soon as I should. The India House is my proper address, where I am sure for the fore part of every day. The instant I got it, I addressed a letter, for Kemble to see, to my friend Henry Robertson, the Treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. He had a conference with Kemble, and the result is, that Robertson, in the name of the management, recognized to me the full ratifying of your bargain: £250 for Ali, the 'Slaves,' and another piece which they had not received. He assures me the whole will be paid you, or the proportion for the two former, as soon as ever the Treasury will permit it. He offered to write the same to you, if I pleased. He thinks in a month or so they will be able to liquidate it. He is positive no trick could be meant you, as Mr. Planché's alterations, which were trifling, were not at all considered as affecting your bargain. With respect to the copy-right of 'Ali,' he was of opinion no money would be given for it, as 'Ali' is quite laid aside. This explanation being given, you would not think of printing the two copies together by way of recrimination. He told me the secret of the two 'Galley Slaves' at Drury Lane. Elliston, if he is informed right, engaged Poole to translate it, but before Poole's translation arrived, finding it coming out at Cov. Gar., he procured copies of two several translations of it in London. So you see here are four translations, reckoning yours. I fear no copy-right would be got for it, for anybody may print it and anybody has. Yours has run seven nights, and R. is of opinion it will not exceed in number of nights the nights of 'Ali'—about thirteen. But your full right to your bargain with the management is in the fullest manner recognized by him officially. He gave me every hope the money will be spared as soon as they can spare it. He said *a month or two*, but seemed to me to mean about *a month*. A new lady is coming out in Juliet, to whom they look very confidently for replenishing their treasury. Robertson is a very good fellow and I can

rely upon his statement. Should you have any more pieces, and want to get a copy-right for them, I am the worst person to negotiate with any bookseller, having been cheated by all I have had to do with (except Taylor and Hessey,—but they do not publish theatrical pieces), and I know not how to go about it, or who to apply to. But if you had no better negotiator, I should know the minimum you expect, for I should not like to make a bargain out of my own head, being (after the Duke of Wellington) the worst of all negotiators. I find from Robertson you have written to Bishop on the subject. Have you named anything of the copy-right of the 'Slaves?' R. thinks no publisher would pay for it, and you would not risque it on your own account. This is a mere business letter, so I will just send my love to my little wife at Versailles, to her dear mother, etc.

"Believe me, yours truly, "C. L."

CHAPTER III.

LETTERS TO BARTON CONTINUED—CORRESPONDENCE WITH WILSON ON DEFOE—LETTERS TO HOWARD PAYNE—MISS KELLY.

[1822-3.]

ENCOURAGED by Lamb's kindness, Mr. Barton continued the correspondence, which became the most frequent in which Lamb had engaged for many years. The following letter is in acknowledgment of a publication of Mr. Barton's chiefly directed to oppose the theories and tastes of Lord Byron and his friends:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"East-India House, 9th Oct. 1822.

"Dear Sir,—I am ashamed not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious, and very seasonable. I do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better:—

> 'Full fathom five the Atheist lies,
> Of his bones are hell-dice made.'

"I want time, or fancy, to fill up the rest. I sincerely sympathise with you on your doleful confinement. Of time, health, and riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good, because they give us Time. What a weight of wearisome prison hours have I to look back and forward to, as quite cut out of life! and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let me work task-work. I shall be glad to hear that your grievance is mitigated.

"I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself; I will therefore end (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London), begging you to accept this letteret for a letter—a leveret makes a better present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

"I hear that Lloyd is well, and has returned to his family. I think this will give you pleasure to hear.

"I remain, dear sir, yours truly, "C. Lamb."

The next letter will speak for itself.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dec. 23rd, 1822.

"Dear Sir,—I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolary purposes. Christmas, too, is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning skull. It is a visiting, unquiet, unquakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately hampered with company. I hope you have some holidays at this period. I have one day—Christmas-day; alas! too few to commemorate the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many times hard work. To play, is for a man to do what he pleases, or to do nothing—to go about soothing his particular fancies. I have lived to a time of life to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterwards. Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bothered perhaps, till half-past twelve brings up the tray; and what you steal of convivial enjoyment after, is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

"I am pleased with your liking 'John Woodvil,' and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakespear and Miss Baillie. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Groat's have you missed traversing! I could almost envy you to have

so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the books I want to read. Oh, to forget Fielding, Steele, &c., and read 'em new!

"Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up cheap Fox's Journal? There are no Quaker circulating libraries? Elwood, too, I must have. I rather grudge that Southey has taken up the history of your people: I am afraid he will put in some levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine articles, where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I would reform them. Why should not you write a poetical account of your old worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman? but I remember you did talk of something of that kind, as a counterpart to the 'Ecclesiastical Sketches.' But would not a poem be more consecutive than a string of sonnets? You have no martyrs *quite to the fire*, I think, among you; but plenty of heroic confessors, spirit-martyrs, lamb-lions. Think of it; it would be better than a series of sonnets on 'Eminent Bankers.' I like a hit at our way of life, though it does well for me, better than anything short of *all one's time to one's self;* for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and pictures are good, and money to buy them therefore good, but to buy *time!* in other words, life!

The 'compliments of the time' to you, should end my letter; to a Friend, I suppose, I must say the 'sincerity of the season;' I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily-penned note, believe me, with great respect,

"C. LAMB."

In this winter Mr. Walter Wilson, one of the friends of Lamb's youth, applied to him for information respecting De Foe, whose life he was about to write. The renewal of the acquaintance was very pleasant to Lamb, who many years before used to take daily walks with Wilson, and to call him "brother." The two letters which we now give relate to this undertaking:—

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"E. I. H., 16th December, 1822.

"Dear Wilson,—*Lightning* I was going to call you. You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters but at the office; 'tis so much time cribbed out of the Company; and I am but just got out of the thick of a tea-sale, in which most of the entry of notes, deposits, &c., usually falls to my share.

"I have nothing of De Foe's but two or three novels and the 'Plague History.' I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I have not looked into them latterly), I would say that in the appearance of *truth*, in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called, or rather auto-biographies), but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in everything he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot choose but believe them. It is like reading evidence given in a court of justice. So anxious the story-teller seems that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it with his favourite figure of speech, 'I say,' so and so, though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories, and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed, it is to such principally that he writes. His style is everywhere beautiful, but plain and *homely* Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers; hence it is an especial favourite with seafaring men, poor boys, servant-maids, &c. His novels

are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy, from their deep interest, to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents, which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half or two-thirds of 'Colonel Jack' is of this description. The beginning of 'Colonel Jack' is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. 'Roxana' (first edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of it in subsequent editions from a foolish hypercriticism of his friend Southerne. But 'Moll Flanders,' the 'Account of the Plague,' &c., are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character. Believe me, with friendly recollections —*Brother* (as I used to call you), "Yours,

"C. LAMB."

The second, dated a few months later, was addressed to Mr. Wilson at Lufton, near Yeovil, Somerset:—

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.[1]

"24th Feb., 1823.

Dr. W.,—I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have any thing to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of 'Roxana,' the preface to which stated that the author had left out all that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in the way of *his*, prying in at windows to get

[1] [Collated with the original autograph.]

a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falconer from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* 'Roxana.' The prologue you speak of was mine, and so named, but not worth much. You ask me for 2 or 3 pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer Col. Jack to either Rob. Cr. or Roxana. I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention.[1] I do not know that Swift mentions him; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond 'Crusoe.' I do not know who wrote Quarll. I never thought of Quarll as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the Englishman by Sir Rd. Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of Crusoe. You must quote it entire. Capt. G. Carleton wrote his own memoirs, they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, & a good book. Puzzelli puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about Donald M'Leod. I never heard of them. So you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistance I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about Defoe or from you.

"Your old friend,

"C. Lamb."

"From my and your old compound."

[1] Those who wish to read an admirable character of De Foe, associated with the most valuable information respecting his personal history, should revert to an article in the "Edinburgh Review" on De Foe, attributed to the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and of the delightful "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," almost as charming as its subject.

How bitterly Lamb felt his East India bondage, has abundantly appeared from his letters during many years. Yet there never was wanting a secret consciousness of the benefits which it ensured for him, the precious independence which he won by his hours of toil, and the freedom of his mind, to work only "at his own sweet will," which his confinement to the desk obtained. This sense of the blessings which a fixed income, derived from ascertained duties, confers, was nobly expressed in reference to a casual fancy in one of the letters of his fellow in clerkly as well as in poetical labours, Bernard Barton—a fancy as alien to the habitual thoughts of his friend, as to his own—for no one has pursued a steadier course on the weary way of duty than the poet whose brief dream of literary engrossment incited Lamb to make a generous amends to his ledger for all his unjust reproaches. The references to the booksellers have the colouring of fantastical exaggeration, by which he delighted to give effect to the immediate feeling; but making allowance for this mere play of fancy, how just is the following advice—how wholesome for every youth who hesitates whether he shall abandon the certain reward of plodding industry for the splendid miseries of authorship.[1]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"January 9th, 1823.

"'Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you!!!'

"Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars, when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want

[1] [It is singular that, some years before, Mr. Barton had received similar advice from a different poet—Lord Byron—in a letter of June 1st, 1812.]

for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a counting-house, all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers—what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book-drudgery, what he has found them. Oh, you know not, may you never know! the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine; but a slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious task-work. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit (a jeweller or silversmith for instance), and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background; in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches! I contend that a bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. Baldwin, who first engaged me as Elia, has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying appeals). Yet how the knave fawned, when I was of service to him! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c.

"Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public; you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for anything that worthy *personage* cares. I bless every star, that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking-office; what! is there not from six to eleven P.M. six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's-time, if you could think so! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts, that disturb the brain of the unlucky

wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance! Henceforth I retract all my foul complaints of mercantile employment, look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome, dead timber of a desk, that makes me live! A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen, but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close, but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it *six weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's-ear. You will much oblige me by this kindness. "Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

Lamb thus communicated to Mr. Barton the prosecution of his researches into Primitive Quakerism :—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"February 17th, 1823.

"My dear Sir,—I have read quite through the ponderous folio of George Fox. I think Sewell has been judicious in omitting certain parts, as for instance where G. F. *has* revealed to him the natures of all the creatures in their names, as Adam had. He luckily turns aside from that compendious study of natural history, which might have superseded Buffon, to his proper spiritual pursuits, only just hinting what a philosopher he might have been. The ominous passage is near the beginning of the book. It is clear he means a physical knowledge without trope or figure. Also, pretences to miraculous healing, and the like, are more frequent than I should have suspected from the epitome in Sewell. He is nevertheless a great spiritual man, and I feel very much obliged by your procuring me the loan of it. How I like the Quaker phrases, though I think they were hardly completed till Woolman. A pretty little manual of Quaker language (with an endeavour to explain them) might be gathered out of his book. Could not you do it? I have read through G. F. without finding any explanation of the term *first volume* in the title-page. It takes in all, both his life and his death. Are there more

last words of him? Pray how may I return it to Mr. Sewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage-coach; not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard's *reading it;* but it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it in safety? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six months; I think I was about as many days in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipt a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my 'Quakers' Meeting,' as having said he was 'lifted up in spirit,' (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase,) 'and the judge and jury were as dead men under his feet.' I find no such words in his journal, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent: I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that everything I touch turns into 'a lie?' I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as proof of the stupendous power of that poet, but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory! Yes, I have seen Miss Coleridge,[1] and wish I had such a daughter. God love her! To think she should have had to toil through five octavos of that cursed (I forget I write to a Quaker) Abbeypony History,[2] and then to abridge them to three, and all for £113! At her years to be doing stupid Jesuits' Latin into English, when she should be reading or writing romances! Heaven send her uncle[3] do not breed her up a Quarterly Reviewer!—which reminds me that he has spoken very respectfully of you in the last Number, which is the next thing to having a Review all to oneself. Your description of Mr. Mitford's[4] place makes me long for a pippin

[1] [Sara Henry Coleridge, S. T. C.'s only daughter.]

[2] ["An Account of the Abipones," from the Latin of Martin Dobrizhoffer, 1821, 3 vols. 8vo. Edited by Southey.]

[3] [Southey, whose first wife and Mrs. Coleridge were sisters.]

[4] [The Rev. John Mitford, of Benhall Rectory, Suffolk, editor of many of our poets and a graceful sonneteer. He seems to have become known to Lamb through Barton. Among the Crossley MSS. sold at Sotheby's, June 20, 1885, Nos. 3029-30, occur Mitford's Commentary on the Achilleis of Statius, and his "Recollections," the latter form

and some caraways, and a cup of sack in his orchard, when the sweets of the night come in.

"Farewell. "C. LAMB."

Lamb's new acquaintance, Mr. Howard Payne, came to him pretty often about this time, for assistance and advice in his dramatic endeavours; and Lamb appears to have been very kind to him.

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE.

"23rd January, '23.

"Dear Payne,—I have no mornings (my day begins at 5 p.m.) to transact business in, or talents for it, so I employ Mary, who has seen Robertson, who says that the Piece which is to be Operafied was sent to you six weeks since by a Mr. Hunter, whose journey has been delayed, but he supposes you have it by this time. On receiving it back properly done, the rest of your dues will be forthcoming. You have received £30 from Harwood, I hope? Bishop was at the theatre when Mary called, and he has put your other piece into C. Kemble's hands (the piece you talk of offering Elliston) and C. K. sent down word that he had not yet had time to read it. So stand your affairs at present. Glossop has got the 'Murderer.' Will you address him on the subject, or shall I—that is, Mary? She says you must write more *showable* letters about these matters, for, with all our trouble of crossing out this word, and giving a cleaner turn to th' other, and folding down at this part, and squeezing an obnoxious epithet into a corner, she can hardly communicate their contents without offence. What, man, put less gall in your ink, or write me a biting tragedy!

"C. LAMB."

ing *fifty octavo volumes*, and described as very important and interesting. I looked through them in the vague hope of meeting with some Eliana, but without success. They chiefly deal with Walpole, Gray, and writers of that time.]

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE.

[1823.]

"My Dear Miss Lamb,—I have enclosed for you Mr. Payne's piece called 'Grandpapa,' which I regret to say is not thought to be of the nature that will suit this theatre; but as there appears to be much merit in it, Mr. Kemble strongly recommends that you should send it to the English Opera House, for which it seems to be excellently adapted. As you have already been kind enough to be our medium of communication with Mr. Payne, I have imposed this trouble upon you; but if you do not like to act for Mr. Payne in the business, and have no means of disposing of the piece, I will forward it to Paris or elsewhere as you think he may prefer.

"Very truly yours,

"HENRY ROBERTSON.

"T. R. C. G., 8th Feb., 1823."

"Dr. P——,—We have just received the above, and want your instructions. It strikes me as a very merry little piece, that should be played by *very young actors*. It strikes me that Miss Clara Fisher would play the *boy* exactly. She is just such a forward chit. No young *man* would do it without its appearing absurd, but in a girl's hands it would have just all the reality that a short dream of an act requires. Then for the sister, if Miss Stevenson that was were Miss Stevenson and younger, they two would carry it off. I do not know who they have got in that young line, besides Miss C. F., at Drury, nor how you would like Elliston to have it—has he not had it? I am thick with Arnold, but I have always heard that the very slender profits of the English Opera House do not admit of his giving above a trifle, or next to none, for a piece of this kind. Write me what I should do, what you would ask, &c. The music (printed) is returned with the piece, and the French original. Tell Mr. Grattan I thank him for his book, which as far as I have read it is a very *companionable one*. I have but just received it. It came the same hour with your packet from Cov. Gar., *i.e.*, yester-night late, to my

summer residence, where, tell Kenney, the cow is quiet. Love to all at Versailles. Write quickly. "C. L.

"I have no acquaintance with Kemble at all, having only met him once or twice; but any information, &c., I can get from R., who is a good fellow, you may command. I am sorry the rogues are so dilatory, but I distinctly believe they mean to fulfil their engagement. I am sorry you are not here to see to these things. I am a poor man of business, but command me to the short extent of my tether. My sister's kind remembrance ever.

"C. L."

The offerings of pig still continued. This time it was an acquaintance of Manning in Hertfordshire—Farmer Bruton of Wheathampstead—whose wife, in a letter of May 28th, 1819, to the Chinese explorer, Lamb terms "a glorious woman"—who was the donor of that most welcome of arrivals in the way of viand.

TO MR. AND MRS. BRUTON.[1]

"Twelfth Day, 1823.

"The pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears; but, in spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice), I contrived to get at one of them.

"It came in boots too, which I took as a favour. Generally these petty-toes, pretty toes! are missing; but I suppose he wore them to look taller.

"He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been a Chinese and a female.

"If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes;[2] seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

[1] [Babson's Eliana, 1866, p. 422.]

[2] ["Sylva and Terra," 2 vols., 1786, edited by Hunter, not Evelyn's editions, which were printed at different times, the latter in a small duodecimo.]

"He crackled delicately.

"I left a blank at the top of my letter, not being determined which to address it to; so farmer and farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long. Vive l'Agriculture!

"How do you make your pigs so little? They are vastly engaging at the age; I was so myself. Now I am a disagreeable old boy, a middle-aged gentleman and a half. My faculties (thank God) are not much impaired."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLICATION OF "ELIA"—LETTERS TO BARTON, PAYNE, PROCTER, MISS HUTCHINSON, LLOYD, HOOD, CARY, AND ALLSOP.

[1823.]

IN the beginning of the year 1823, the Essays of Elia, collected in a volume, were published by Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who had become the proprietors of the "London Magazine."

[In a letter to one of his publishers, of December 7th, 1822, Lamb explains the origin of the name, which he chose to assume as his *nom de plume*. "Poor Elia," he writes, "the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow-clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it, like myself, many years; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of 'Elia' to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself. I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it."

Lamb had originally intended that the book should have a prefatory introduction, as follows:—

DEDICATION.

To the Friendly and Judicious Reader,

who will take these Papers, as they were meant; not understanding every thing perversely in its absolute and literal

sense, but giving fair construction, as to an after-dinner conversation; allowing for the rashness and necessary incompleteness of first thoughts; and not remembering, for the purpose of an after taunt, words spoken peradventure after the fourth glass, the Author wishes (what he would will for himself) plenty of good friends to stand by him, good books to solace him, prosperous events to all his honest undertakings, and a candid interpretation to his most hasty words and actions. The other sort (and he hopes many of them will purchase his book too) he greets with the curt invitation of Timon, "Uncover, dogs, and lap:" or he dismisses them with the confident security of the philosopher,—"you beat but on the case of Elia."

But the idea was eventually relinquished, for, as Lamb observes: "The Essays want no Preface: they are *all Preface*. . . . Let Elia come forth bare as he was born;" and, in a postscript to Taylor, he insists: "N.B. No Preface;" and so preface there was not.

In the number of the "London Magazine" for August, 1822, there is, under the "Lion's Head," a short statement, explanatory of the paper entitled "The Confessions of a Drunkard,"[1] which had been attacked in the "Quarterly." "The truth is, the writer (possibly Lamb himself) had been reading among the essays of a contemporary, who has perversely been confounded with him, a paper in which Edax (or the Great Eater) humorously complaineth of an inordinate appetite; and it struck him that a better paper—of deeper interest and wider usefulness—might be made out of the imagined experience of a Great Drinker. . . . We deny not that a portion of his own experiences may have passed into the picture (as who that is not a washy fellow but must at some time have felt the after-operation of a too generous cup?)."]

The book met with a fair sale at first, while the magazine, in which its contents had appeared, declined. The anecdote of the three Quakers gravely walking out of the inn where they had taken tea on the road, on an extortionate

[1] [This appears to have been first printed in Basil Montagu's little book called "Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors," 12mo., 1818.]

demand, one after the other, without paying anything,[1] had excited some gentle remonstrance on the part of Barton's sister, to which Lamb thus replied :—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 11th, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it as exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister or you have put upon it, does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surpassing coolness—that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an utter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best story-teller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I also borrowed from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms. Should fate ever so order it that you shall ever be in town with your sister, mine bids me say, that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her. I think I must give up the cause of the Bank. From 9 to 9 is Galley Slavery, but I hope it is but temporary. Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight into the natures of animals must fail, as I shall transcribe the passage. It appears to me that he stopt short in time, and was on the brink of falling with his friend Naylor, my favourite. The book shall be forthcoming whenever your friend can make convenient to call for it.

"They have dragged me again into the Magazine; but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone. 'Some brains' (I think Ben Jonson says it) 'will endure but one skimming.' We are about to have an inundation

[1] See "Imperfect Sympathies."—Essays of Elia, p. 74.

of poetry from the Lakes—Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the north. The She-Coleridges have taken flight to my regret. With Sara's own-made acquisitions, her unaffectedness and no-pretensions are beautiful. You might pass an age with her without suspecting that she knew any thing but her mother's tongue. I don't mean any reflections on Mr. Coleridge here. I had better have said her vernacular idiom. Poor C., I wish he had a home to receive his daughter in; but he is but as a stranger or a visitor in this world. How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature anything but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I could never seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal, too, of my own. Writing to a great man lately,[1] who is moreover very heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend, who by the female side quarters the Protectoral arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent! My letters are generally charged as double at the Post-office, from their inveterate clumsiness of foldure; so you must not take it disrespectful to yourself, if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose £100 a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions!!

"It is time to have done my incoherences.

"Believe me, yours truly,

"C. Lamb."

[The temporary difference with Moore has been mentioned and explained, and Lamb and he met at dinner on April the 4th this year. In a letter to Barton of the next day, the writer, after apologizing for not having acknowledged the first of two letters sent to him since his last communication with his Quaker friend, proceeds to shew how he had lately been occupying himself at home in writing a paper for the "London" "To an Old Gentleman whose education has been neglected," and when it was finished, Taylor and Hessey

[1] [Sir Walter Scott. It was in the letter of 1822 on behalf of Godwin. See above.]

would not print it, so Lamb was diverted into another track—"so I took up Scott," he says, meaning John Scott of Amwell's "Critical Essays on the English Poets," 1785[1]—"where I had scribbled some petulant remarks,[2] which for a makeshift I father'd on Ritson." Barton had transmitted a sonnet by their common friend Mitford, of which Lamb spoke kindly, and also stated that he had sent it on to the Editor of the "London," with the management of which he had no wish to meddle. He thought that Barton would do well not to combat the sectarian prejudices of his Society by printing any thing which might offend the order, and he was not very sanguine that the Quakers would overcome their religious scruples in a hurry. "When I see any Quaker names," says he, "in the Courses of Ancient Music, or as Directors of the British Institution, or bequeathing medals to Oxford for the best classical themes, &c., then I shall begin to hope they will emancipate you. But what as a Society can they do for you?—" Lamb pointed out that they had no appointments to give, no political influence, and if his correspondent broke through the traces, he was as one excommunicated.

The letter concludes with a description of the meeting between the writer and his distinguished contemporaries at the house of Monkhouse:—

"I wished for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore,—half the poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloucester Place! It was a delightful evening! Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk—had all the talk; and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb, while Apollo lectured on his and their fine art. It is a lie that poets are envious; I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as best authors. I am scribbling a muddy epistle

[1] [This book contained an introductory memoir by John Hoole of the India House, and had an additional interest perhaps for Lamb by reason of the association with Amwell.]

[2] [These "Remarks" form a paper in the Collected Editions of Lamb.]

with an aching head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night; marry, it was hippocras rather, and do me the favour to mention my respects to Mr. Mitford, who is so good as to entertain good thoughts of Elia, but don't show this almost impertinent scrawl. I will write more respectfully next time, for believe me, if not in words, in feelings, yours most so. Pray accept this as a letter in the mean time. "C. L."

He was still performing good offices for Mr. Payne, to whom at Paris the three following letters were addressed about this time. In the first, he advises him of a copy of "Elia" awaiting his acceptance, and gives an amusing account of his interview with a learned lady introduced to him by Fanny Holcroft:—

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE.

"1823.

"Dear Payne,—Your little books are most acceptable. 'Tis a delicate edition. They are gone to the binder's. When they come home I shall have two—the 'Camp' and 'Patrick's Day'—to read for the first time. I may say three, for I never read the 'School for Scandal.' '*Seen* it I have, and in its happier days.' With the books Harwood[1] left a truncheon or mathematical instrument, of which we have not yet ascertained the use. It is like a telescope, but unglazed. Or a ruler, but not smooth enough. It opens like a fan, and discovers a frame such as they weave lace upon at Lyons and Chambery. Possibly it is from those parts. I do not value the present the less for not being quite able to detect its purport. When I can find any one coming your way I have a volume for you, my Elias collected. Tell Poole, his Cockney in the Lon. Mag. tickled me exceedingly. Harwood is to be with us this evening with Fanny, who comes to introduce a literary lady, who wants to see me,—and whose portentous name is *Plura*, in English, 'many things.' Now, of all God's creatures, I detest letters-affecting, authors-hunting ladies. But Fanny 'will have it so.' So Miss Many-Things and I are

[1] [Harwood Holcroft.]

to have a conference, of which you shall have the result. I dare say she does not play at whist. Treasurer Robertson, whose coffers are absolutely swelling with pantomimic receipts, called on me yesterday to say he is going to write to you, but if I were also, I might as well say that your last bill is at the Banker's, and will be honored on the instant receipt of the third Piece, which you have stipulated for. If you have any such in readiness, strike while the iron is hot, before the Clown cools. Tell Mrs. Kenney, that the Miss F. H. (or H. F.) Kelly, who has begun so splendidly in Juliet, is the identical little Fanny Kelly, who used to play on their green before their great Lying-Inn Lodgings at Bayswater. Her career has stopt short by the injudicious bringing her out in a vile new Tragedy, and for a third character in a stupid old one,—the 'Earl of Essex.' This is Macready's doing, who taught her. Her recitation, &c., (*not her voice or person*) is masculine. It is so clever, it seemed a male *Debût*. But cleverness is the bane of Female Tragedy especially. Passions uttered logically, &c. It is bad enough in men-actors. Could you do nothing for little Clara Fisher? Are there no French Pieces with a Child in them? By Pieces I mean here dramas, to prevent male-constructions. Did not the Blue Girl remind you of some of Congreve's women? Angelica or Millamant? To me she was a vision of Genteel Comedy realized. Those kind of people never come to see one. *N'import*—havn't I Miss Many-Things coming? Will you ask Horace Smith to ——[The remainder of this letter has been lost].

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE.

"Dear Payne,—A friend and fellow-clerk of mine, Mr. White[1] (a good fellow), coming to your parts, I would fain have accompanied him, but am forced instead to send a part of me, verse and prose, most of it from 20 to 30 years old, such as I then was, and I am not much altered.

"Paris, which I hardly knew whether I liked when I was in it, is an object of no small magnitude with me now. I want to be going, to the Jardin des Plantes (is that right,

[1] [Edward White, of the India House.]

Louisa?) with you—to Pere la Chaise, La Morgue, and all the sentimentalities. How is Talma, and his (my) dear Shakspeare?

"N.B.—My friend White knows Paris thoroughly, and does not want a guide. We did, and had one. We both join in thanks. Do you remember a Blue-Silk Girl (English) at the Luxembourg, that did not much seem to attend to the Pictures, who fell in love with you, and whom I fell in love with—an inquisitive, prying, curious Beauty—where is she?

"*Votre Tres Humble Serviteur,*
"CHARLOIS AGNEAU,
"*alias* C. LAMB.

"Guichy is well, and much as usual. He seems blind to all the distinctions of life, except to those of sex. Remembrance to Kenney and Poole."

TO J. HOWARD PAYNE.

[No Date.]

"Dear J. H. P.—Thank you. I shall certainly attend your farce if in town; but as 'tis possible I shall ruralize this week, I will have no orders of you till next week. All Sundays I am ready to ambulate with you, but will make no engagement for this week,—to leave the poor residue of my holidays unembarrassed. "Yours truly,
"C. L."

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Procter, in acknowledgment of a miniature of Pope which he had presented to Lamb.

TO MR. PROCTER.

"April 13th, 1823.

"Dear Lad,—You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But indeed I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing, which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life. Whether it is

that the Magazine paying me so much a page, I am loath to throw away composition—how much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a gem it is, in my town room; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the 'Essay on Man,' I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, if he were just conceiving 'Awake, my St. John.' Neither is he in the 'Rape of the Lock' mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the 'Epistle to Jervis,' between gay and tender,

'And other beauties envy Worsley's eyes.'[1]

"I'll be damn'd if that isn't the line. He is brooding over it, with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you anything so good.

"I have dined with T. Moore[2] and breakfasted with Rogers, since I saw you; have much to say about them when we meet, which I trust will be in a week or two. I have been over-watched and over-poeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged for health's sake to wish him gone: but now he is gone I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts of —altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me?

"Rogers spake very kindly of you, as every body does, and none with so much reason as your "C. L."

The following was addressed to Miss Hutchinson at Ramsgate, whither she had gone with an invalid relative.

The preface playing on the pretended defects of Miss Lamb's handwriting, is one of those artifices of affection which, not finding scope in eulogistic epithets, take refuge in apparent abuse. Lamb himself, at this time, wrote a singularly neat hand, having greatly improved in the India

[1] [Epistle to Mr. Jervas, with Dryden's Translation of Du Fresnoy's "Art of Painting," 1695, line 60.]

[2] [See the letter of 1822 to Kenney, *suprâ*.]

House, where he also learned to flourish,—a facility he took a pride in, and sometimes indulged; but his flourishes (wherefore it would be too curious to inquire) almost always shaped themselves into a visionary corkscrew, "never made to draw."

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

[April 25, 1823.]

"Dear Miss H.,—Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first), which is obliged to be interlined; which spoils the neatest epistle, you know. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date (25th April, 1823), are not figures, but figurantes; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless, as drunkards in the day-time. It is no better when she rules her paper. Her Lines 'are not less erring' than her words. A sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet; which, you know, is quite contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this [*here a large blot is inserted*], but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear left in their place. I like a clear letter. A bold free hand and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go through them (a second operation) to dot her *i*'s and cross her *t*'s. I don't think she can make a corkscrew if she tried, which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up.

"There is a corkscrew! One of the best I ever drew. By the way, what incomparable whisky that was of Monkhouse's! But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing, like a fencer at a fair."

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"April 25th, 1823.

"Dear Miss H.,—It gives me great pleasure to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. Monkhouse's spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all; (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in). 'Time' (as was said of one of us) 'toils after us in vain.' I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that 'shuts amain'—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray, remember me euphoniously to Mr. Gruvellegan. That Lee Priory[1] must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints?—and does it stand at Kingsgate?"

Here is an apology for a letter, referring to a seal used on one to which this is an answer—the device was a pelican feeding her young from her own breast. The allusions to the young gentleman and the old one are significant of De Quincey's series of communications to the "London Magazine," and Lamb's "Letter" arising out of them. The magazine was beginning to decline.

[1] [Lee Priory was the seat of the Brydges family. The Kingsgate, named just below, is near Broadstairs, on the sea coast.]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"May 3rd, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting, of the causes of the backwardness with which persons after a certain time of life set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally justifies the presentiment. Taylor and Hessey did foolishly in not admitting the Sonnet. Surely it might have followed the B. B. I agree with you in thinking Bowring's paper better than the former. I will inquire about my letter to the old gentleman. But I expect it to go in, after those to the young gentleman are completed.

"I do not exactly see why the goose and little goslings should emblematise *a Quaker poet that has no children.* But after all perhaps it is a pelican. The 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' around it I cannot decipher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid a silent meeting of madge-owlets, would be at least intelligible. A full pause here comes upon me as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain—Once! Twice!—nothing comes up. George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox—that sets me off again. I have finished the 'Journal,' and 400 more pages of the 'Doctrinals,' which I picked up for 7*s.* 6*d.* If I get on at this rate, the Society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets to patronise.

"I am at Dalston now; but if when I go back to Covent Garden, I find thy friend has not called for the Journal, thee must put me in a way of sending it; and if it should happen the lender of it know that volume has not the other, I shall be happy in his accepting the Doctrinals, which I shall read but once certainly. It is not a splendid copy, but perfect, save a leaf of Index.

"I cannot but think that the 'London' drags heavily. I miss Janus, and, O, how it misses Hazlitt! Procter, too, is affronted.

"Believe me cordially yours,

"C. Lamb."

Between 1821 and 1827 there is a tolerably regular correspondence between Lamb and Hone—a correspondence as it were, *on small paper*. The Folio Age had almost passed away; and the periodical visits of Hone to the Lambs made letters often unnecessary, so far as they were concerned. It cannot be said that this particular series is of marked interest or consequence, yet it is full of characteristic traits and telling points. With the author of the "Table Book" Lamb was thoroughly at home. He was an antiquary, but of that type which regarded the interiors and essences of old things, rather than their outer garniture or extrinsic properties. His volume on the Ancient Miracle Plays, published in 1823, found its way as a present to Lamb, who spoke of it in a letter to the author with unfeigned satisfaction, and announced his design, on the first opportunity, of offering Hone a copy of "Elia." The date of this communication is May 19th, 1823. The following is worth noting:—"I have Ray's 'Collection of English Words not generally used,' 1691; and in page 60 (north country words) occurs '*Rynt ye*—by your leave, stand handsomely.' As, 'Rynt you, witch,' quoth Bessie Locket to her mother—Proverb, Cheshire." Doubtless, this is the 'Aroint' of Shakspere. In the same collection I find several Shakspearisms. 'Rooky' wood, a northern word for *reeky*, 'misty,' &c. 'Shandy,' a north-country word for *wild*. Sterne was York." The writer concluded with an invitation to Dalston for the Sunday ensuing.

His very old friend Charles Lloyd, whose health was far from satisfactory, but who from time to time produced several volumes of poetry and criticism,[1] was one of the earliest recipients of "Elia;" and in a book of his own poems, published this year, a passage from one of the Essays was prefixed as a motto. The latter work seems to be that which Lamb acknowledges and commends in the following letter.

[1] [See a list of his publications from 1793 to 1823, and some particulars of his latest moments, in my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 217.]

TO CHARLES LLOYD.

[Earlier half of 1823.]

"Your lines are not to be understood reading on one leg. They are sinuous, and to be won with wrestling. I do assure you in sincerity that nothing you have done has given me greater satisfaction. Your obscurity, where you are dark, which is seldom, is that of too much meaning, not the painful obscurity which no toil of the reader can dissipate: not the dead vacuum and floundering place in which imagination finds no footing: it is not the dimness of positive darkness, but of distance; and he that reads and not discerns must get a better pair of spectacles. I admire every piece in the collection. I cannot say the first is best: when I do so, the last read rises up in judgment. To your Mother, to your Sister, to Mary dead—they are all weighty with thought and tender with sentiment. Your poetry is like no other. Those cursed dryads and pagan trumperies of modern verse have put me out of conceit of the very name of poetry. Your verses are as good and as wholesome as prose, and I have made a sad blunder if I do not leave you with an impression that your present is rarely valued. "CHARLES LAMB."

In the "Quarterly Review" for July, 1823, Southey had a paper "On the Progress of Infidelity," in which he spoke of "Elia" as only wanting a sounder religious feeling to make it as delightful as it was original. He had written *truer*, and altered it to *sounder;* and he stated that it had been his intention to make another change, but did not have a proof. Lamb saw this article on his return from a month's pleasant holiday at Hastings, where he lodged (according to his own account) with a baker, at No. 13, Standgate Street. In a letter to Hood,[1] he speaks of his

[1] [Printed *post*. It is in this letter that he mentions where he lodged. But it results from an inquiry which I have been at the pains to institute, that no such street is known ever to have existed at Hastings, nor is it named in Moss's capital account of the town, printed in 1824. Whether Lamb was thinking of some other locality which he had visited, or was wrong in the name of the street only, must remain a matter of conjecture. But from his furnishing Hood with the very number of the house, and from the recent date of his visit, it seems more likely that the latter was the case.]

landlord as "by far the foremost of the savans"—he had a natural history museum, and of his wife as "the funniest thwarting little animal!" In a letter to Barton, he gives a description of his visit to a locality which is now altered beyond recognition, and expresses his first notion respecting Southey's paper.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 10th, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—I shall be happy to read the MS. and to forward it; but Taylor and Hessey must judge for themselves of publication. If it prove interesting, as I doubt not, I shall not spare to say so, you may depend upon it. Suppose you direct it to Accountant's Office, India House. I am glad you have met with some sweetening circumstances to your unpalateable draught.

"I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while; home is the most unforgiving of friends, and always resents absence; I know its old cordial look will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this *our* galley-slavery, that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings; and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, &c., which realize the notions of Juan Fernandez. The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church [1] (by whom or when built un-

[1] [Hollington Church. I have an engraved view of it from a photograph before me, which realizes the description above; but it is now a good deal altered. In Lower's "Compendious History of Sussex," 1862, under Hastings, the author speaking of the distinguished visitors to the town, quotes from some letter of Lamb, of which I know nothing farther, an unfavourable opinion of the place, as it appeared in 1823:—"I love town and country; but this detestable Cinque Port is neither. . . . . There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugitive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea mews and stockbrokers, Amphitrites of the town, and Misses that coquet with the ocean."]

known,) standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it through beautiful woods to so many farm-houses. There it stands like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation; or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead) or a mausoleum; its effect singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image; you must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there; yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all its seemly additaments of *our* worship.

"Southey has attacked 'Elia' on the score of infidelity, in the Quarterly article, 'Progress of Infidelity.' I had not, nor have seen the Monthly. He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all his unguarded expressions on the subject were to be collected—but I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has dropped will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop,—there is corn in Egypt, while there is cash at Leadenhall! You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!

"Yours truly, "C. L."

This feeling was a little diverted by the execution of a scheme, rather suddenly adopted, of removing to a neat cottage at Islington, where Lamb first found himself installed in the dignity of a householder. "A whitish brown tenement," one who visited him there styles it, "standing by itself, close to the New River." "From this place," says Procter (which a friend of his christened 'Petty Venice') he used often to walk into London, to breakfast or dine with an acquaintance." He thus describes his residence:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"[Colebrook Cottage,] September 2nd, 1823.

"Dear B. B.—What will you not say for my not writing? You cannot say, I do not write now. Hessey has not

used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a copy. Neither have I heard any more of your friend's MS., which I will reclaim, whenever you please. When you come London-ward, you will find me no longer in Covent Garden; I have a cottage, in Colebrook Row, Islington; a cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books; and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before.

"The 'London' I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat; it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three: Hazlitt, Procter, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted Wainewright, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

"I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable; but I am so taken up with pruning and gardening—quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gathered my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of father Adam. I recognise the paternity, while I watch my tulips. I almost fell with him, for the first day I turned a drunken gardener (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c., which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers-by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talked of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy 'garden state!'

"I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its owner, with suitable thanks. Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country parson, lean (as a curate ought to be), modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey. You would like him. Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me, with sincere regards, Yours, "C. L."

In the next letter to Barton, Lamb referred to an intended letter to Southey in the Magazine.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"September 17th, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—I have again been reading your 'Stanzas on Bloomfield,' which are the most appropriate that can be imagined,—sweet with Doric delicacy. I like that,—

'Our own more chaste Theocritus'—

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ended with,

'Words, phrases, fashions, pass away;
But truth and nature live through all.'

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord Byron, I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and oneness of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns or Thomson, without sullying the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb, are in fact an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it, always bad in verse, seldom advisable in prose. I doubt if their having been in a paper will not prevent T[aylor] and H[essey] from insertion, but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a very little alteration is wanting in the beginning of the next. You see, I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not) you have brought in his subjects, and (I suppose) his favourite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his

writings but the 'Farmer's Boy.' He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

"I rejoice that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own-roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger? My garden thrives (I am told), though I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salad and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

"Somehow I cannot relish that word Hockey. Can't you supply it by circumlocution, and direct the reader by a note to explain that it means the Hockey? But Hockey choaks me in the text. It raises crowds of mean associations, hawking and spitting—gawky, stalky, mawkish. The sound is every thing—in such dulcet modulations specially. I like 'Gilbert Meldrum's sterner tones,' without knowing who Gilbert Meldrum is. You have slipt in your rhymes, as if they grew there—so natural-artificially or artificial-naturally. There's a vile phrase!

"Do you go on with your 'Quaker Sonnets?' Have 'em ready with 'Southey's Book of the Church.' I meditate a letter to S. in the 'London,' which perhaps will meet the fate of the Sonnet.

"Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to a hundred callings off; and I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter to the Post-office, I think they will return fourpence, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me, though,

"Entirely yours, "C. L."

[In the letter to Barton of September 2nd, 1823, Lamb apprised him that he was to have as his guest that day at dinner, *Dante* Cary, of the British Museum, an accomplished man, whose friendship Lamb preserved to the end. Mr. Cary had been before the literary world some thirty years at this time, as I find a sonnet by him accompanying Miss Seward's Poems printed in 1796, while his version of the "Inferno" first appeared in 1806. It was now the turn of Lamb and his sister to receive the hospitality of Cary, and Sunday was the day fixed — an arrangement afterwards altered.]

TO H. F. CARY.[1]

"India Office, 14th Oct., 1823.

"Dear Sir,—If convenient, will you give us house room on Saturday next? I can sleep anywhere. If another Sunday suit you better, pray let me know. We were talking of Roast *Shoulder* of Mutton with onion sauce; but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host.

"With respects to Mrs. C., yours truly,

"C. LAMB."

A letter to Thomas Hood, his brother humourist, of whom he saw a good deal from time to time at Enfield, though their correspondence, so far as it is known, was brief and slight, refers to Lamb's visit to Hastings in the July of this year, and was doubtless written in the following autumn or winter. An agreeable account of the first meeting between these two wits is given in "Hood's Own," 1846; but it is dateless; it could not have been much before 1823.

TO THOMAS HOOD.[2]

"[1823.]

"And what dost thou at the Priory ?[3] *Cucullus*[4] *non facit*

[1] ["Memoir of H. F. Cary," by his son, 1847, p. 103. The Rev. Offley Henry Cary obligingly informs me by letter that it is his conviction that a box, containing MS. papers, was stolen from the family about thirty years ago, and that in this were perhaps included the letters of Lamb to his grandfather, which he no longer possesses, at all events.]

[2] ["Hood's Own," 1846, p. 554.]

[3] [Some lodgings at Hastings, to which Hood had gone in the hope of getting rid of his rheumatism. It was probably the Priory Farm, which stood on the site of the present Hastings railway station; it was a small detached building, with the Priory Meadows in the rear—a very damp and unpropitious spot for a rheumatic subject, for in those days the Meadows were almost under water, a creek running up into them from the sea by the side of the present Queen's Hotel. St. Andrews Gardens occupy part of the meadows. Of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, founded by Sir Walter de Bricet in the time of Richard I., no vestiges, I believe, are known. The old Farm was the last relic.]

[4] [Note the intended pun on Hood's name.]

Monachum. English me that, and challenge old Lignum Janua [1] to make a better.

"My old New River has presented no extraordinary novelties lately; but there Hope sits every day, speculating upon traditionary gudgeons. I think she has taken the fisheries. I now know the reason why our forefathers were denominated East and West Angles. Yet is there no lack of spawn; for I wash my hands in fishets that come through the pump every morning thick as motelings,—little things that perish untimely, and never taste the brook. You do not tell me of those romantic land bays that be as thou goest to Lover's Seat: [2] neither of that little churchling [3] in the midst of a wood (in the opposite direction, nine furlongs from the town), that seems dropped by the Angel that was tired of carrying two packages; marry, with the other he made shift to pick his flight to Loretto. Inquire out, and see my little Protestant Loretto. It stands apart from trace of human habitation; yet hath it pulpit, reading-desk, and trim font of massiest marble, as if Robinson Crusoe had reared it to soothe himself with old church-going images. I forget its Christian name, and what she-saint was its gossip.

"You should also go to No. 13, Standgate Street,[4]—a baker, who has the finest collection of marine monsters in ten sea counties,—sea dragons, polypi, mer-people, most fantastic. You have only to name the old gentleman in black (not the Devil) that lodged with him a week (he'll remember) last July, and he will show courtesy. He is by far the foremost of the savans. His wife is the funniest thwarting little animal! They are decidedly the Lions of green Hastings. Well, I have made an end of my say. My epistolary time is gone by when I could have scribbled as long (I will not say as agreeable) a letter as thine was to both of us. I am dwindled to notes and letterets. But, in good earnest, I shall be most happy to hail thy return to the waters of Old Sir Hugh.[5] There is nothing

[1] [Tom Woodgate.]
[2] [Compare the letter to Barton of July 10, 1823.]
[3] [Hollington Church now restored = spoilt.]
[4] [Compare the letter to Barton of July 10th, 1823, and the Note.]
[5] [Sir Hugh Middleton.]

like inland murmurs, fresh ripples, and our native minnows.

> 'He sang in meads how sweet the brooklets ran,
> To the rough ocean and red restless sands!'

I design to give up smoking; but I have not yet fixed upon the equivalent vice. I must have *quid pro quo*; or *quo pro quid*,[1] as Tom Woodgate would correct me. My service to him. "C. L."

The occasional correspondence with Allsop knew very few intermissions. The subjoined are grouped together; those without exact note of time were received during the autumn of 1823.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[July, 1823.]

"D. A.,—I expect Procter and Wainewright (Janus W.) this evening: will you come? I suppose it is but a compliment to ask Mrs. Allsop? but it is none to say that we should be glad to see her. Yours Ever. How vexed I am at your Dalston expedition! "C. L.

"Tuesday."

[Colebrook Cottage, Sept. 6, 1823.]

"Dear Allsop,—I am snugly seated at the cottage. Mary is well, but weak, and comes home on Monday; she will soon be strong enough to see her friends here. In the mean time, will you dine with me at ½ past four to-morrow? Ayrton and Mr. Burney are coming.

"Colebrook Cottage, left hand side, end of Colebrook Row, on the western brink of the New River, a detach'd whitish house.

"No answer is required, but come if you can.

"C. Lamb.

"I called on you on Sunday. Respects to Mrs. A. & boy."

[1] [This was the joke, which Lamb himself made when he said that he must have some compensation for leaving off tobacco.]

TO THE SAME.

"India House, September 9th,[1] 1823.

"My Dear A.,—I am going to ask you to do me the greatest favour which a man can do for another. I want to make my will, and to leave my property in trust for my Sister. N.B. I am not therefore going to die.—Would it be unpleasant for you to be named for one? The other two I shall beg the same favour of are Talfourd and Procter. If you feel reluctant, tell me, and it shan't abate one jot of my friendly feeling toward you.

"Yours ever,

"C. LAMB."

[Sept. 10th, 1823.]

"My dear A.,—Your kindness in accepting my request no words of mine can repay. It has made you overflow into some romance which I should have check'd at another time. I hope it may be in the scheme of Providence that my sister may go first (if ever so little a precedence), myself next, and my good executors survive to remember us with kindness many years. God bless you.

"I will set Procter about the will forthwith.

"C. LAMB."

TO THE SAME.

"My dear Allsop,—I thank you for thinking of my recreation. But I am best here—I feel I am; I have tried town lately, but came back worse. Here I must wait till my loneliness has its natural cure. Besides that, though I am not very sanguine, yet I live in hopes of better news from Fulham, and cannot be out of the way. 'Tis ten weeks to-morrow.—I saw Mary a week since; she was in excellent bodily health, but otherwise far from well. But a week or so may give a turn. Love to Mrs. A. & children, and fair weather accompany you. "C. L.

"Tuesday."

[1] [So postmarked, but dated, evidently in error, August 9.]

TO THE SAME.

"Dear A.,—Your Cheese is the best I ever tasted; Mary will tell you so hereafter. She is at home, but has disappointed me. She has gone back rather than improved. However, she has sense enough to value the present; for she is greatly fond of Stilton. Yours is the delicatest, rain-bow-hued, melting piece I ever flavoured. Believe me, I took it the more kindly, following so great a kindness.

"Depend upon't, yours shall be one of the first houses we shall present ourselves at, when we have got our Bill of Health.

"Being both yours and Mrs. Allsop's truly,

"C. L. & M. L."

TO THE SAME.

"Dear Sir,—Will Mrs. A. & you dine with us to-morrow at ½ past 3? Do not think of troubling yourself to send (if you cannot come), as we shall provide only a goose (which is in the House), and your not coming will make no difference in our arrangements.

"Your obliged

"C. Lamb.

"Saturday, 4th October [1823]."

TO THE SAME.

[October, 1823.]

"Dear Sir,—Mary has got a cold, and the nights are dreadful; but at the first indication of Spring (alias the first dry weather in November *early*) it is our intention to surprise you early some evening.

"Believe me, most truly yours,

"C. L.

"The Cottage, Saturday night.

"Mary regrets very much Mrs. Allsop's fruitless visit. It made her swear! She was gone to visit Miss Hutchinson, whom she found out."

TO THE SAME.

"Dear Allsop,—Our dinner-hour on Sundays is 4, at which we shall be most happy to see Mrs. A. & yourself—I mean next Sunday, but I also mean any Sunday. Pray come. I am up to my very ears in business, but pray come.

"Yours most sincerely,

"C. L.

"E. I. H. 7th November [1823]."

CHAPTER V.

LETTER OF "ELIA" TO ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1823.]

IN the year 1823, Lamb appeared, for the first and only time in his life, before the public as an assailant: and the object of his attack was one of his oldest and fastest friends, Mr. Southey. It might, indeed, have been predicted of Lamb, that if ever he *did* enter the arena of personal controversy, it would be with one who had obtained a place in his affection; for no motive less powerful than the resentment of friendship which deemed itself wounded, could place him in a situation so abhorrent to his habitual thoughts. Lamb had, up to this time, little reason to love reviews or reviewers; and the connexion of Southey with the Quarterly Review, while he felt that it raised, and softened, and refined the tone of that powerful organ of a great party, sometimes vexed him for his friend. His indignation also had been enlisted on behalf of Hazlitt and Hunt, who had been attacked in this work in a manner which he regarded as unfair; for the critics had not been content with descanting on the peculiarities in the style and taste of the one, or reprobating the political or personal vehemence of the other,—which were fair subjects of controversy,—but spoke of them with a contempt which every man of letters had a right to resent as unjust. He had been much annoyed by an allusion to himself in an article on Hazlitt's Political Essays, which appeared in the Review for November, 1819, as "one whom we should wish to see in more respectable company;" for he felt a compliment paid him at the expense of a friend, as a grievance far beyond any direct attack on himself; [and in a letter to one of his regular correspondents he intimated his design, even at that time, of making an attack on "Mr. Shoemaker Gifford."] He was also exceedingly hurt by a reference

made in an article on Dr. Reid's work "On Nervous Affections," which appeared in July, 1822, to an essay entitled "The Confessions of a Drunkard," which he had contributed [in 1818] to a collection of tracts published by his friend, Mr. Basil Montagu, on the effect of spirituous liquors. The contribution of this paper is a striking proof of the prevalence of Lamb's personal regards over all selfish feelings and tastes; for no one was less disposed than he to Montagu's theory or practice of abstinence; yet he was willing to gratify his friend by this terrible picture of the extreme effects of intemperance, of which his own occasional deviations from the right line of sobriety had given him hints and glimpses. The reviewer of Dr. Reid, adverting to this essay, speaks of it as "a fearful picture of the consequences of intemperance, which WE happen to know is a true tale." How far it was from actual truth the Essays of Elia, the production of a later day, in which the maturity of his feeling, humour, and reason is exhibited, may sufficiently witness. These articles were not written by Mr. Southey; but they prepared Lamb to feel acutely any attack from the Review; and a paragraph in the article on the Progress of Infidelity, in which he recognised the hand of his old friend, gave poignancy to all the painful associations which had arisen from the same work, and concentrated them in one bitter feeling. After recording some of the confessions of unbelievers of the wretchedness which their infidelity brought on them, Mr. Southey thus proceeded :—

"Unbelievers have not always been honest enough thus to express their real feelings; but this we know concerning them, that when they have renounced their birthright of hope, they have not been able to divest themselves of fear. From the nature of the human mind, this might be presumed, and in fact it is so. They may deaden the heart and stupify the conscience, but they cannot destroy the imaginative faculty. There is a remarkable proof of this in Elia's Essays, a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original. In that upon 'Witches and other Night Fears,' he says, 'It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create

these terrors in children; they can at most but give them a direction. Dear little T[hornton] H[unt], who of all children has been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition, who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition, or scarcely to be told of bad men, or to hear or read of any distressing story, finds all this world of fear, from which he has been so rigidly excluded *ab extra*, in his own 'thick-coming fancies,' and from his little midnight pillow this nurse child of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the well-damned murderer are tranquillity.'—This poor child, instead of being trained up in the way he should go, had been bred in the ways of modern philosophy; he had systematically been prevented from knowing anything of that Saviour who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;' care had been taken that he should not pray to God, nor lie down at night in reliance upon His good providence! Nor let it be supposed that terrors of imagination belong to childhood alone. The reprobate heart, which has discarded all love of God, cannot so easily rid itself of the fear of the devil; and even when it succeeds in that also, it will then create a hell for itself. We have heard of unbelievers who thought it probable that they should be awake in their graves; and this was the opinion for which they had exchanged a Christian's hope of immortality!"

The number of the "Quarterly" with the obnoxious remarks in it was seen by Lamb, as I have explained, on his return from a visit to Hastings; and he could not have long hesitated as to the course which he should pursue, for the "London Magazine" for the succeeding October contained the famous "Epistle to Robert Southey, Esquire, from 'Elia,'"—a composition, which must have occupied, amid official interruptions, several weeks. It is not strictly, perhaps, a piece of correspondence; but at the same time it is hardly an Essay.

"Sir,—You have done me an unfriendly office, without perhaps much considering what you were doing. You have given an ill name to my poor lucubrations. In a recent

paper on 'Infidelity,' you usher in a conditional commendation of them with an exception which, preceding the encomium, and taking up nearly the same space with it, must impress your readers with the notion, that the objectionable parts in them are at least equal in quantity to the pardonable. The censure is in fact the criticism; the praise—a concession merely. Exceptions usually follow, to qualify praise or blame. But there stands your reproof, in the very front of your notice, in ugly characters, like some bugbear, to frighten all good Christians from purchasing. Through you I become an object of suspicion to preceptors of youth and fathers of families. '*A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original.*' With no further explanation, what must your readers conjecture, but that my little volume is some vehicle for heresy or infidelity? The quotation, which you honour me by subjoining, oddly enough is of a character which bespeaks a temperament in the writer the very reverse of *that* your reproof goes to insinuate. Had you been taxing me with superstition, the passage would have been pertinent to the censure. Was it worth your while to go so far out of your way to affront the feelings of an old friend, and commit yourself by an irrelevant quotation, for the pleasure of reflecting upon a poor child, an exile at Genoa?[1]

"I am at a loss what particular essay you had in view (if my poor ramblings amount to that appellation) when you were in such a hurry to thrust in your objection, like bad news, foremost.—Perhaps the paper on 'Saying Graces' was the obnoxious feature. I have endeavoured there to rescue a voluntary duty—good in place, but never, as I remember, literally commanded—from the charge of an indecent formality. Rightly taken, sir, that paper was not against graces, but want of grace; not against the ceremony, but the carelessness and slovenliness so often observed in the performance of it.

"Or was it *that* on the 'New Year'—in which I have described the feelings of the merely natural man, on a consideration of the amazing change, which is supposable to take place on our removal from this fleshly scene? If men

[1] [Thornton Hunt who, with the family, was still residing in Italy.]

would honestly confess their misgivings (which few men will) there are times when the strongest Christian of us, I believe, has reeled under questions of such staggering obscurity. I do not accuse you of this weakness. There are some who tremblingly reach out shaking hands to the guidance of Faith—others who stoutly venture into the dark (their Human Confidence their leader, whom they mistake for Faith); and, investing themselves beforehand with cherubic wings, as they fancy, find their new robes as familiar, and fitting to their supposed growth and stature in godliness, as the coat they left off yesterday—some whose hope totters upon crutches—others who stalk into futurity upon stilts.

"The contemplation of a Spiritual World which, without the addition of a misgiving conscience, is enough to shake some natures to their foundation—is smoothly got over by others, who shall float over the black billows in their little boat of No-Distrust as unconcernedly as over a summer sea. The difference is chiefly constitutional.

"One man shall love his friends and his friends' faces; and, under the uncertainty of conversing with them again, in the same manner and familiar circumstances of sight, speech, &c. as upon earth—in a moment of no irreverent weakness—for a dream-while—no more—would be almost content, for a reward of a life of virtue (if he could ascribe such acceptance to his lame performances), to take up his portion with those he loved, and was made to love, in this good world, which he knows—which was created so lovely, beyond his deservings. Another, embracing a more exalted vision—so that he might receive indefinite additaments of power, knowledge, beauty, glory, &c.—is ready to forego the recognition of humbler individualities of earth and the old familiar faces. The shapings of our heavens are the modifications of our constitution; and Mr. Feeble Mind or Mr. Great Heart is born in every one of us.

"Some (and such have been accounted the safest divines) have shrunk from pronouncing upon the final state of any man; nor dare they pronounce the case of Judas to be desperate. Others (with stronger optics), as plainly as with the eye of flesh, shall behold a *given king* in bliss and a *given chamberlain* in torment; even to the eternising of a

cast of the eye in the latter, his own self-mocked and good-humouredly-borne deformity on earth, but supposed to aggravate the uncouth and hideous expression of his pangs in the other place. That one man can presume so far, and that another would with shuddering disclaim such confidences, is, I believe, an effect of the nerves purely.

"If in either of these papers, or elsewhere, I have been betrayed into some levities—not affronting the sanctuary, but glancing perhaps at some of the outskirts and extreme edges, the debateable land between the holy and profane regions—(for the admixture of man's inventions, twisting themselves with the name of the religion itself, has artfully made it difficult to touch even the alloy, without, in some men's estimation, soiling the fine gold)—if I have sported within the purlieus of serious matter—it was, I dare say, a humour—be not startled, sir,—which I have unwittingly derived from yourself. You have all your life been making a jest of the Devil. Not of the scriptural meaning of that dark essence—personal or allegorical; for the nature is nowhere plainly delivered. I acquit you of intentional irreverence. But indeed you have made wonderfully free with, and been mighty pleasant upon, the popular idea and attributes of him. A Noble Lord,[1] your brother Visionary, has scarcely taken greater liberties with the material keys and merely Catholic notion of St. Peter. You have flattered him in prose: you have chanted him in goodly odes. You have been his Jester; volunteer Laureat and self-elected Court Poet to Beelzebub.

"You have never ridiculed, I believe, what you thought to be religion; but you are always girding at what some pious, but perhaps mistaken folks, think to be so. For this reason I am sorry to hear, that you are engaged upon a life of George Fox. I know you will fall into the error of intermixing some comic stuff with your seriousness. The Quakers tremble at the subject in your hands. The Methodists are shy of you upon account of *their* founder.[2] But, above all, our Popish brethren are most in your debt. The errors of that Church have proved a fruitful source to

[1] [Byron.]

[2] [Alluding to Southey's "Life of Wesley." 1820, in which the writer gave an account of the origin and growth of Methodism.]

your scoffing vein. Their Legend has been a Golden one to you. And here your friends, sir, have noticed a notable inconsistency. To the imposing rites, the solemn penances, devout austerities of that communion: the affecting though erring piety of their hermits: the silence and solitude of the Chartreux—their crossings, their holy waters, their Virgin and their saints—to these, they say, you have been indebted for the best feelings and the richest imagery of your Epic poetry. You have drawn copious drafts upon Loretto. We thought at one time you were going post to Rome—but that in the facetious commentaries, which it is your custom to append so plentifully, and (some say) injudiciously, to your loftiest performances in this kind, you spurn the uplifted toe, which you but just now seemed to court; leave his holiness in the lurch; and show him a fair pair of Protestant heels under your Romish vestment. When we think you already at the wicket, suddenly a violent cross wind blows you transverse——

> 'Ten thousand leagues awry————
> ———————— Then might we see
> Cowls, hoods, and habit, with their wearers, tost
> And flutter'd into rags; then reliques, beads,
> Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
> The sport of winds.'

You pick up pence by showing the hallowed bones, shrine, and crucifix; and you take money a second time by exposing the trick of them afterwards. You carry your verse to Castle Angelo for sale in a morning; and, swifter than a pedlar can transmute his pack, you are at Canterbury with your prose ware before night.

"Sir, is it that I dislike you in this merry vein? The very reverse. No countenance becomes an intelligent jest better than your own. It is your grave aspect, when you look awful upon your poor friends, which I would deprecate.

"In more than one place, if I mistake not, you have been pleased to compliment me at the expense of my companions. I cannot accept your compliment at such a price. The upbraiding a man's poverty naturally makes him look about him, to see whether he be so poor indeed as he is presumed to be. You have put me upon counting my riches. Really, sir, I did not know I was so wealthy in the

article of friendships. There is ——, and ——, whom you never heard of, but exemplary characters both, and excellent church-goers; and Norris, mine and my father's friend for nearly half a century; and the enthusiast for Wordsworth's poetry, T. N. Talfourd,[1] a little tainted with Socinianism, it is to be feared, but constant in his attachments and a capital critic; and Rickman, a sturdy old Athanasian, so that sets all to rights again; and Wainewright, the light and warm-as-light hearted Janus of the 'London;' and the translator of Dante, still a curate, modest and amiable Cary; and Allan Cunningham, the large-hearted Scot; and Procter, candid and affectionate as his own poetry; and Allsop, Coleridge's friend; and Gilman, his more than friend; and Coleridge himself, the same to me still, as in those old evenings, when we used to sit and speculate (do you remember them, sir?) at our old Salutation tavern upon Pantisocracy and golden days to come on earth; and Wordsworth (why, sir, I might drop my rent-roll here; such goodly farms and manors have I reckoned up already. In what possession has not this last name alone estated me!—but I will go on)—and Monkhouse, the noble-minded kinsman by wedlock of Wordsworth, and H. C. Robinson, unwearied in the offices of a friend; and Clarkson, almost above the narrowness of that relation, yet condescending not seldom heretofore from the labours of his world-embracing charity to bless my humble roof; and the gall-less and single-minded Dyer; and the high-minded associate of Cook, the veteran Colonel,[2] with his lusty heart still sending cartels of defiance to old Time; and not least, William Ayrton, the last and steadiest left to me of that little knot of whist-players, that used to assemble weekly, for so many years, at the Queen's Gate (you remember them, sir?) and called Admiral Burney friend.

"I will come to the point at once. I believe you will not make many exceptions to my associates so far. But I have purposely omitted some intimacies, which I do not yet repent of having contracted—with two gentlemen,

[1] [There is a blank here in Talfourd; but in the original text in the magazine the initials of the name occur.]

[2] [Colonel Phillips.]

diametrically opposed to yourself in principles. You will understand me to allude to the authors of 'Rimini' and of the 'Table Talk.'[1] And first of the former.—

"It is an error more particularly incident to persons of the correctest principles and habits, to seclude themselves from the rest of mankind as from another species, and form into knots and clubs. The best people, herding thus exclusively, are in danger of contracting a narrowness. Heat and cold, dryness and moisture, in the natural world, do not fly asunder, to split the globe into sectarian parts and separations; but mingling, as they best may, correct the malignity of any single predominance. The analogy holds, I suppose, in the moral world. If all the good people were to ship themselves off to Terra Incognita, what, in humanity's name, is to become of the refuse? If the persons, whom I have chiefly in view, have not pushed matters to this extremity yet, they carry them as far as they can go. Instead of mixing with the infidel and the freethinker—in the room of opening a negociation, to try at least to find out at which gate the error entered—they huddle close together, in a weak fear of infection, like that pusillanimous underling in Spenser—

> 'This is the wandering wood, this Error's den;
> A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
> Therefore, I reed, beware. Fly, fly, quoth then
> The fearful Dwarf.'

And, if they be writers in orthodox journals addressing themselves only to the irritable passions of the unbeliever—they proceed in a safe system of strengthening the strong hands, and confirming the valiant knees; of converting the already converted, and proselyting their own party. I am the more convinced of this from a passage in the very treatise which occasioned this letter. It is where, having recommended to the doubter the writings of Michaelis and Lardner, you ride triumphant over the necks of all infidels, sceptics, and dissenters, from this time to the world's end, upon the wheels of two unanswerable deductions. I do not hold it meet to set down, in a miscellaneous compila-

[1] [Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt.]

tion like this, such religious words as you have thought fit to introduce into the pages of a petulant literary journal. I therefore beg leave to substitute *numerals*, and refer to the 'Quarterly Review' (for January) for filling of them up. 'Here,' say you, as in the history of 7, if these books are authentic, the events which they relate must be true; if they were written by 8, 9 is 10 and 11?' Your first deduction, if it means honestly, rests upon two identical propositions; though I suspect an unfairness in one of the terms, which this would not be quite the proper place for explicating. At all events, *you* have no cause to triumph; you have not been proving the premises, but refer for satisfaction therein to very long and laborious works, which may well employ the sceptic a twelvemonth or two to digest, before he can possibly be ripe for your conclusion. When he has satisfied himself about the premises, he will concede to you the inference, I dare say, most readily.—But your latter deduction, *viz.* that because 8 has written a book concerning 9, therefore 10 and 11 was certainly his meaning, is one of the most extraordinary conclusions *per saltum*, that I have had the good fortune to meet with. As far as 10 is verbally asserted in the writings, all sects must agree with you; but you cannot be ignorant of the many various ways in which the doctrine of the Trinity has been understood, from a low figurative expression (with the Unitarians) up to the most mysterious actuality; in which highest sense alone you and your church take it. And for 11, that there is *no other possible conclusion*—to hazard this in the face of so many thousands of Arians and Socinians, &c., who have drawn so opposite a one, is such a piece of theological hardihood as, I think, warrants me in concluding that, when you sit down to pen theology, you do not at all consider your opponents, but have in your eye, merely and exclusively, readers of the same way of thinking with yourself, and therefore have no occasion to trouble yourself with the quality of the logic to which you treat them.

"Neither can I think, if you had had the welfare of the poor child—over whose hopeless condition you whine so lamentably and (I must think) unseasonably—seriously at heart, that you could have taken the step of sticking him up

by name—T. H. is as good as *naming* him[1]—to perpetuate an outrage upon the parental feelings, as long as the 'Quarterly Review' shall last. Was it necessary to specify an individual case, and give to Christian compassion the appearance of personal attack? Is this the way to conciliate unbelievers, or not rather to widen the breach irreparably?

"I own I could never think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeable or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles. Others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men I ever knew was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we wish the character false for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?

"Accident introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. Leigh Hunt, and the experience of his many friendly qualities confirmed a friendship between us. You, who have been misrepresented yourself, I should hope have not lent an idle ear to the calumnies which have been spread abroad respecting this gentleman. I was admitted to his household for some years, and do most solemnly aver that I believe him to be in his domestic relations as correct as any man. He chose an ill-judged subject for a poem; the peccant humours of which have been visited on him tenfold by the artful use which his adversaries have made of an *equivocal term*. The subject itself was started by Dante, but better because brieflier treated of. But the crime of the lovers, in the Italian and the English poet, with its aggravated enormity of circumstance, is not of a kind (as the critics of the latter well knew) with those conjunctions, for which Nature herself has provided no excuse, because no temptation. It has nothing in common with the black horrors, sung by Ford and Massinger. The familiarising of it in tale and fable may be for that reason

[1] [Thornton Hunt.]

incidentally more contagious. In spite of 'Rimini,' I must look upon its author as a man of taste and a poet. He is better than so: he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew, and matchless as a fireside companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say that, in his more genial moods, he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to a boyish sportiveness—in both your conversations. His handwriting is so much the same with your own, that I have opened more than one letter of his, hoping, nay, not doubting, but it was from you, and have been disappointed (he will bear with my saying so) at the discovery of my error. L. H. is unfortunate in holding some loose and not very definite speculations (for at times I think he hardly knows whither his premises would carry him) on marriage—the tenets, I conceive, of the 'Political Justice' carried a little further. For anything I could discover in his practice, they have reference, like those, to some future possible condition of society, and not to the present times. But neither for these obliquities of thinking (upon which my own conclusions are as distant as the poles asunder)—nor for his political asperities and petulancies, which are wearing out with the heats and vanities of youth —did I select him for a friend; but for qualities which fitted him for that relation. I do not know whether I flatter myself with being the occasion; but certain it is that, touched with some misgivings for sundry harsh things which he had written aforetime against our friend Coleridge, before he left this country he sought a reconciliation with that gentleman (himself being his own introducer), and found it.

"L. H. is now in Italy; on his departure to which land with much regret I took my leave of him and of his little family—seven of them, sir, with their mother[1]—and as kind a set of little people (T. H. and all), as affectionate children as ever blessed a parent. Had you seen them, sir, I think you could not have looked upon them as so many little Jonases—but rather as pledges of the vessel's safety, that was to bear such a freight of love.

[1] [Compare the letter to Barron Field of Sept. 22nd, 1822, where a passage respecting Hunt may be read parallel with this.]

"I wish you would read Mr. H.'s lines to that same T. H. 'six years' old, 'during a sickness: '—

> 'Sleep breaks at last from out thee,
> My little patient boy'—

(they are to be found in the 47th page of 'Foliage')—and ask yourself how far they are out of the spirit of Christianity. I have a letter from Italy, received but the other day, into which L. H. has put as much heart and as many friendly yearnings after old associates and native country, as, I think, paper can well hold. It would do you no hurt to give that the perusal also.

"From the *other gentleman*[1] I neither expect nor desire (as he is well assured) any such concessions as Leigh Hunt made to Coleridge.[2] What hath soured him, and made him to suspect his friends of infidelity towards him when there was no such matter, I know not. I stood well with him for fifteen years (the proudest of my life), and have ever spoken my full mind of him to some, to whom his panegyric must naturally be least tasteful. I never in thought swerved from him; I never betrayed him; I never slackened in my admiration of him; I was the same to him (neither better nor worse), though he could not see it, as in the days when he thought fit to trust me. At this instant, he may be preparing for me some compliment above my deserts, as he has sprinkled many such among his admirable books, for which I rest his debtor; or, for anything I know or can guess to the contrary, he may be about to read a lecture on my weaknesses. He is welcome to them (as he was to my humble hearth), if they can divert a spleen, or ventilate a fit of sullenness. I wish he would not quarrel with the world at the rate he does; but the reconciliation must be effected by himself, and I despair of living to see that day. But, protesting against much that he has written, and some things which he chooses

[1] [Hazlitt.]

[2] [See just above. The concessions were in connection with the reviews of some of Coleridge's publications in Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" (and these, I believe, were not written by Hunt). The latter, in his "Autobiography," 1860, pp. 279-80, while differing from Coleridge on certain points, speaks on the whole very highly of his powers.]

to do: judging him by his conversation which I enjoyed so long, and relished so deeply; or by his books, in those places where no clouding passion intervenes—I should belie my own conscience, if I said less than that I think William Hazlitt to be, in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy, which was betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have preserved it entire; and I think I shall go in my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion. But I forget my manners—you will pardon me, sir—I return to the correspondence.

"Sir, you were pleased (you know where) to invite me to a compliance with the wholesome forms and doctrines of the Church of England. I take your advice with as much kindness as it was meant. But I must think the invitation rather more kind than seasonable. I am a Dissenter. The last sect, with which you can remember me to have made common profession, were the Unitarians. You would think it not very pertinent, if (fearing that all was not well with you), I were gravely to invite you (for a remedy) to attend with me a course of Mr. Belsham's Lectures at Hackney. Perhaps I have scruples to some of your forms and doctrines. But if I come, am I secure of civil treatment?—The last time I was in any of your places of worship was on Easter Sunday last. I had the satisfaction of listening to a very sensible sermon of an argumentative turn, delivered with great propriety, by one of your bishops. The place was Westminster Abbey. As such religion as I have has always acted on me more by way of sentiment than argumentative process, I was not unwilling, after sermon ended, by no unbecoming transition, to pass over to some serious feelings, impossible to be disconnected from the sight of those old tombs, &c. But, by whose order I know not, I was debarred that privilege even for so short a space as a few minutes, and turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street with feelings, which I could not help, but not very congenial to the day or the discourse. I do not know that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your churches.

"You had your education at Westminster; and doubtless, among those dim aisles and cloisters, you must have gathered much of that devotional feeling in those young years, on which your purest mind feeds still—and may it feed! The antiquarian spirit, strong in you, and gracefully blending ever with the religious, may have been sown in you among those wrecks of splendid mortality. You owe it to the place of your education; you owe it to your learned fondness for the architecture of your ancestors; you owe it to the venerableness of your ecclesiastical establishment, which is daily lessened and called in question through these practices—to speak aloud your sense of them; never to desist raising your voice against them, till they be totally done away with and abolished; till the doors of Westminster Abbey be no longer closed against the decent, though low-in-purse enthusiast, or blameless devotee, who must commit an injury against his family economy, if he would be indulged with a bare admission within its wall. You owe it to the decencies, which you wish to see maintained in its impressive services, that our Cathedral be no longer an object of inspection to the poor at those times only, in which they must rob from their attendance on the worship every minute which they can bestow upon the fabric. In vain the public prints have taken up this subject: in vain such poor nameless writers as myself express their indignation. A word from you, sir—a hint in your journal—would be sufficient to fling open the doors of the beautiful temple again, as we can remember them when we were boys. At that time of life, what would the imaginative faculty (such as it is) in both of us have suffered, if the entrance to so much reflection had been obstructed by the demand of so much silver!—If we had scraped it up to gain an occasional admission (as we certainly should have done), would the sight of those old tombs have been as impressive to us (while we had been weighing anxiously prudence against sentiment) as when the gates stood open, as those of the adjacent Park; when we could walk in at any time, as the mood brought us, for a shorter or longer time, as *that* lasted? Is the being shown over a place the same as silently for ourselves detecting the genius of it? In no part of our beloved Abbey now can a person find

entrance (out of service-time) under the sum of *two shillings*. The rich and the great will smile at the anti-climax presumed to lie in these two short words. But you can tell them, sir, how much quiet worth, how much capacity for enlarged feeling, how much taste and genius, may co-exist, especially in youth, with a purse incompetent to this demand. A respected friend of ours, during his late visit to the metropolis, presented himself for admission to Saint Paul's. At the same time a decently-clothed man, with as decent a wife and child, were bargaining for the same indulgence. The price was only two-pence each person. The poor but decent man hesitated, desirous to go in: but there were three of them, and he turned away reluctantly. Perhaps he wished to have seen the tomb of Nelson. Perhaps the interior of the cathedral was his object. But in the state of his finances, even sixpence might reasonably seem too much. Tell the aristocracy of the country (no man can do it more impressively); instruct them of what value these insignificant pieces of money, these minims to their sight, may be to their humbler brethren. Shame these sellers out of the Temple! Show the poor, that you can sometimes think of them in some other light than as mutineers and malcontents. Conciliate them by such kind methods to their superiors, civil and ecclesiastical. Stop the mouths of the railers; and suffer your old friends, upon the old terms, again to honour and admire you. Stifle not the suggestions of your better nature with the stale evasion, that an indiscriminate admission would expose the tombs to violation. Remember your boy-days. Did you ever see or hear of a mob in the Abbey, while it was free to all? Do the rabble come there, or trouble their heads about such speculations? It is all that you can do to drive them into your churches; they do not voluntarily offer themselves. They have, alas! no passion for antiquities, for tomb of king or prelate, sage or poet. If they had, they would no longer be the rabble.

"For forty years that I have known the fabric, the only well-attested charge of violation adduced has been—a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy, Major André. And is it for this—the wanton mischief of some school-boy, fired perhaps with

raw notions of transatlantic freedom—or the remote possibility of such a mischief occurring again, so easily to be prevented by stationing a constable within the walls, if the vergers are incompetent to the duty—is it upon such wretched pretences, that the people of England are made to pay a new Peter's pence so long abrogated, or must content themselves with contemplating the ragged exterior of their Cathedral? The mischief was done about the time that you were a scholar there. Do you know anything about the unfortunate relic?—can you help us in this emergency to find the nose?—or can you give Chantrey a notion (from memory) of its pristine life and vigour? I am willing for peace' sake to subscribe my guinea towards a restoration of the lamented feature.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"ELIA."

The feeling with which this letter was received by Southey may be best described in his own words in a letter to Moxon. "On my part there was not even a momentary feeling of anger; I was very much surprised and grieved, because I knew how much he would condemn himself. And yet no resentful letter was ever written less offensively: his gentle nature may be seen in it throughout." Southey was right in his belief in the revulsion Lamb's feelings would undergo, when the excitement under which he had written subsided; for although he would retract nothing he had ever said or written in defence of his friends, he was ready at once to surrender every resentment of his own.

A letter, which should have strictly found a somewhat earlier place in the series, as it was manifestly written prior to the last, graphically narrates the immersion of George Dyer in the New River, which supplies the subject of one of "The Last Essays of Elia;" and which is curious, as containing not only the germ of that delightful article, but the first sketch of the Brandy-and-Water Doctor, therein celebrated as miraculous.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"Nov. 1823.

"Dear Mrs. H.,—Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week, George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noon day*) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out from her kitchen window; but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out, they can hardly tell; but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. 'Send for the Doctor!' they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the Public House at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water-practice, having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four to dinner I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury.[1] All my friends are open-mouthed

[1] [In the "Athenæum" for 1835, Procter says:—"I happened to call at Lamb's house about ten minutes after this accident; I saw before me a train of water running from the door to the river. Lamb had gone for a surgeon; the maid was running about distraught with dry clothes on one arm, and the dripping habiliments of the involuntary bather in the other. Miss Lamb, agitated, and whimpering forth 'Poor Mr. Dyer,' in the most forlorn voice, stood plunging her hands into the wet pockets of his trousers, to fish up the wet coin. Dyer himself, an amiable little old man, who took water *in*ternally, and eschewed strong liquors, lay on his host's bed, hidden by blankets; his head, on which was his short gray hair, alone peered out; and this, having been rubbed dry by a resolute hand,—(by the maid's, I believe, who assisted at the

about having paling before the river, but I cannot see that, because a . . . lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

"I have had the honour of dining at the Mansion House, on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

"We continue to like our house prodigiously. Does Mary Hazlitt go on with her novel, or has she begun another? I would not discourage her, tho' we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable.

"Our kind remembrances to her and hers and you and yours.—Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate."[1]

rescue,) looked as if it were bristling with a thousand needles. Lamb, moreover, in his anxiety, had administered a formidable dose of Cogniac and water to the sufferer, and *he* (used only to the simple element) babbled without cessation."]

[1] [Coleridge, according to Allsop, also approved entirely of it. "I am much delighted with Lamb's letter to Southey; I have read it many times; Lamb feels firm, and has taken sure ground."]

CHAPTER VI.

RECONCILIATION WITH SOUTHEY—LETTERS TO HIM, HARRISON AINSWORTH, MRS. HAZLITT, BARTON, AND CARY.

[1823-4.]

SOUTHEY came to London in November, 1823, and wrote proposing to call at Islington; and on the 21st Lamb thus replied:—

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"E. I. H., 21st November, 1823.

"Dear Southey,—The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed 'Quarterly Review' had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the 'Confessions of a Drunkard' was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wish both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

"I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us; but come and heap embers. We deserve it, I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

"Do come early in the day, by sun-light, that you may see my *Milton*.[1]

"I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington. A detached whitish house, close to the New River, end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.

"Will you let me know the day before?

"Your penitent "C. LAMB.

"P.S.—I do not think your hand-writing at all like Hunt's. I do not think many things I did think."

In the following letter Lamb anticipates the meeting:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"November 22nd, 1823.

"Dear B. B.,—I am ashamed of not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much; but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Stirling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. There was an incipient lie strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But, in plain truth, I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the Laureate, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble! 'Tis worthy of my old idea of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

"You are too much apprehensive of your complaint: I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who, when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest liver of the two.

"The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can, as ignorant as the world was before Galen, of the entire inner construction of the animal man; not to be conscious of a midriff; to hold kidneys

[1] [The portrait of Milton already mentioned.]

(save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction; not to know whereabouts the gall grows; to account the circulation of the blood an idle whimsey of Harvey's; to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like bad humours. Those medical gentries choose each his favourite part; one takes the lungs, another the aforesaid liver, and refer to that, whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tampering with hard terms of art—viscosity, scirrhosity, and those bugbears by which simple patients are scared into their graves. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of tailors, think how long the Lord Chancellor sits, think of the brooding hen! I protest I cannot answer thy sister's kind inquiry; but I judge, I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy; and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for martyrs. Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true history, of George Dyer's aquatic incursion in the next 'London.'[1] Beware his fate, when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook Cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa, but not too much indulgence on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer, this bright November,

"C. L."

Southey went to Colebrook Cottage, as proposed; the awkwardness of meeting went off in a moment; and the affectionate intimacy, which had lasted for almost twenty years, was renewed, to be interrupted only by death.

About this time, Lamb added to his list of friends the late WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH, son of a solicitor at Manchester. He was at present a youth of eighteen, and had not published anything giving a hint of that genius which he subsequently developed. But in the letter below there is some allusion suggestive of proofs passing between Lamb and himself. Mr. Ainsworth, then resident at Man-

[1] [The paper entitled "Amicus Redivivus."]

chester, excited by an enthusiastic admiration of "Elia," had sent a copy of Warner's "Albion's England" and other books, for which Lamb thus conveyed his thanks to his unseen friend:—

TO MR. AINSWORTH.

"India-House, 9th Dec., 1823.

"Dear Sir,—I should have thanked you for your books and compliments sooner, but have been waiting for a revise to be sent, which does not come, though I returned the proof on the receipt of your letter. I have read Warner with great pleasure. What an elaborate piece of alliteration and antithesis! why, it must have been a labour far above the most difficult versification. There is a fine simile or picture of Semiramis arming to repel a siege. I do not mean to keep the book, for I suspect you are forming a curious collection, and I do not pretend to anything of the kind. I have not a black-letter book among mine, old Chaucer excepted, and am not bibliomanist enough to like black-letter. It is painful to read; therefore I must insist on returning it at opportunity, not from contumacy and reluctance to be obliged, but because it must suit you better than me. The loss of a present *from* should never exceed the gain of a present *to*. I hold this maxim infallible in the accepting line. I read your magazines with satisfaction. I thoroughly agree with you as to the German Faust, as far as I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'Tis a disagreeable canting tale of seduction, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Faustus—Curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored, to end in the seducing of a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

'Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel bough,
That sometimes grew within this learned man.
Faustus is gone —"[1]

[1] [Dyce's Marlowe, 1850, ii., 83-4.]

"What a noble natural transition from metaphor to plain speaking! as if the figurative had flagged in description of such a loss, and was reduced to tell the fact simply.

"I must now thank you for your very kind invitation. It is not out of prospect that I may see Manchester some day, and then I will avail myself of your kindness. But holidays are scarce things with me, and the laws of attendance are getting stronger and stronger at Leadenhall. But I shall bear it in mind. Meantime, something may (more probably) bring you to town, where I shall be happy to see you. I am always to be found (alas!) at my desk in the fore part of the day.

"I wonder why they do not send the revise. I leave late at office, and my abode lies out of the way, or I should have seen about it. If you are impatient, perhaps a line to the printer, directing him to send it me, at Accountant's Office, may answer. You will see by the scrawl that I only snatch a few minutes from intermitting business.

"Your obliged servant,

"C. LAMB.

"(If I had time I would go over this letter again, and dot all my *i*'s.)"

To Ainsworth, still pressing him to visit Manchester, he sent the following reply.

TO MR. AINSWORTH.

"I. H., Dec. 29th, 1823.

"My dear Sir,—You talk of months at a time and I know not what inducements to visit Manchester, Heaven knows how gratifying! but I have had my little month of 1823 already. It is all over, and without incurring a disagreeable favour, I cannot so much as get a single holiday till the season returns with the next year. Even our half-hour's absences from office are set down in a book! Next year, if I can spare a day or two of it, I will come to Manchester, but I have reasons at home against longer absences.

"I am so ill just at present—(an illness of my own

procuring last night; who is perfect?)—that nothing but your very great kindness could make me write. I will bear in mind the letter to W. W., and you shall have it quite in time, before the 12th.

"My aching and confused head warns me to leave off. With a muddled sense of gratefulness, which I shall apprehend more clearly to-morrow, I remain your friend unseen, "C. L."

"Will your occasions or inclination bring you to London? It will give me great pleasure to show you everything that Islington can boast, if you know the meaning of that very Cockney sound.[1] We have the New River! I am ashamed of this scrawl: but I beg you to accept it for the present. I am full of qualms.

'A fool at fifty is a fool indeed.'"

Bernard Barton still frequently wrote to him: and he did not withhold the wished-for reply even when letter-writing was a burthen. The following gives a ludicrous account of his indisposition:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Jan. 9th, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare,—'a whoreson lethargy,' Falstaff calls it,—an indisposition to do anything, or to be anything,—a total deadness and distaste,—a suspension of vitality,—an indifference to locality,—a numb, soporifical, good-for-nothingness,—an ossification all over,—an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events,—a mind-stupor,—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience? Did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? This has been for many weeks my lot, and my excuse; my fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty furlongs from here to the end of this

[1] [In the following year Ainsworth lost his father, removed to London, gave up the law, and turned author and publisher, having in 1826 married the daughter of Ebers of New Bond Street.]

demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say; nothing is of more importance than another; I am flatter than a denial or a pancake; emptier than Judge Parke's wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it; a cipher, an 0! I acknowledge life at all only by an occasional convulsional cough and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world; life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation; I can't distinguish veal from mutton; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality, yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world will be at an end to-morrow, I should just say, 'Will it?' I have not volition enough left to dot my *i*'s, much less to comb my eyebrows; my eyes are set in my head; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again; my skull is a Grub-street attic to let—not so much as a joint-stool or a crack'd jordan left in it; my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little, when their heads are off. O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, toothache,—an earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs; pain is life—the sharper, the more evidence of life; but this apathy, this death! Did you ever have an obstinate cold,—a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything? Yet do I try all I can to cure it; I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

"It is just fifteen minutes after twelve; Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps; Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat; and the Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns, but, on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes. "C. L."

Barton took this letter rather seriously, and Lamb thus sought to remove his friendly anxieties.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Jan. 23rd, 1824.

"My dear Sir,—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light; it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold. The fact is, I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The 'London' must do without me for a time, for I have lost all interest about it; and whether I shall recover it again I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, and not teaze and puzzle you with my aridities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the spring.

"Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we love so much. It is done in your good manner. Your friend Tayler called upon me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His book I 'like;' it is only too stuffed with scripture, too parsonish. The best thing in it is the boy's own story, When I say it is too full of scripture, I mean it is too full of direct quotations; no book can have too much of silent scripture in it; but the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose in the writer seems to be to recommend something else, viz., Religion. You know what Horace says of the *Deus intersit?* I am not able to explain myself,—you must do it for me. My sister's part in the 'Leicester School' (about two-thirds) was purely her own; as it was (to the same quantity) in the 'Shakespear Tales' which bear my name. I wrote only the 'Witch Aunt,' the 'First Going to Church,' and the final story about 'A little Indian girl' in a ship. Your account of my black-balling amused me. *I think, as Quakers they did right.* There are some things hard to be understood. The more I think, the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that letter; but I have been so out of letter-writing of late years, that it is a sore effort to sit

down to it; and I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness; I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me; then again comes the refreshing shower—

'I have been merry twice and once ere now.'

"You said something about Mr. Mitford in a late letter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my Milton (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Tayler there some day. Pray say so to both. Coleridge's book is in good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy*. It bears an unsaleable title, 'Extracts from Bishop Leighton,' but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it[1]—more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton in it, I hope; for what is Leighton? Do you trouble yourself about libel cases? The decision against Hunt for the 'Vision of Judgment' made me sick. What is to become of the good old talk about our good old king—his personal virtues saving us from a Revolution, &c., &c.! Why, none that think can utter it now. It must stink. And the 'Vision' is as to himward such a tolerant good-humoured thing! What a wretched thing a Lord Chief Justice is, always was, and will be![2]

"Keep your good spirits up, dear B. B., mine will return; they are at present in abeyance; but I am rather lethargic

[1] [Nothing immediate seems to have come of this. In a letter to Wordsworth of April, 1825, it is quoted by Lamb as a Commentary on Leighton, and as being in the hands of Taylor and Hessey for consideration. I do not know it as a book; but it may have partly found its way into the "Notes on English Divines," 1853.]

[2] [It seems a curious coincidence that we have on the Bench at present two namesakes of great men, Coleridge and Bacon. From what Lamb says of Ellenborough, he would not probably have entertained a very high opinion of either. We have been very unfortunate of late in our Lord Chief Justices; the ranks of the vocation are so poorly recruited, that you are to have a mediocre lawyer, if a good man, or if a strong lawyer, a disreputable fellow. The Bar is of course the nursery from which judges have to be drawn, and while stuff and silk gowns remain what they are, we must not expect much improvement in the intellectual calibre of the higher and highest grades of the profession. But indifferent as our judicial staff is, the magistracy, paid or unpaid, is still worse —Shallow cut into slices.]

than miserable. I don't know but a good horsewhip would be more beneficial to me than physic. My head, without aching, will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion. I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me, (which I trust will have reason soon to be dissipated,) and assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.

"Yours truly, "C. L."

We have not heard of any presentation copies of late; but Mr. Ollier now sent a copy of a little volume of Tales from his own pen,[1] and was requited with a note of thanks and approbation. This gentleman, after the retirement of his brother James and himself from business, obtained employment as a reader at Mr. Colburn's.

TO CHARLES OLLIER.

[January 27th, 1824.]

"Dear Ollier,—Many thanks from both of us for 'Inesilla.' I wished myself younger, that I might have more enjoyed the terror of that desolate city and the damned palace. I think it as fine as any thing in its way, and wish you joy of success, &c.

"With better weather, I shall hope to see you at Islington. "Meantime, believe me, yours truly,

"C. Lamb.

"Scribbled midst official flurry."

[On back:]

"Mr. Ollier, 5, Maida Hill West, Paddington."

[1] ["Inesilla; or, The Tempter. A Romance; with other Tales." 12mo., 1824.]

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS TO BARTON—IMPORTANT CRITICAL DECLARATION ON WILLIAM BLAKE—VIEWS ON BYRON AND SHELLEY—LETTERS TO CARY, MRS. COLLIER, PROCTER—DEATH OF MUNDEN.

[1824.]

THE following sufficiently indicate the circumstances under which they were written :—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"February 25th, 1824.

"My dear sir,—Your title of 'Poetic Vigils' arrides me much more than a volume of verse which has no meaning. The motto says nothing; but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but where they are singularly felicitous; there is foppery in them; they are un-plain, un-Quakerish; they are good only where they flow from the title, and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest, no commentary on vigils. By the way, a wag would recommend you to the line of Pope,

'Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep.'

I by no means wish it; but it may explain what I mean—that a neat motto is child of the title. I think 'Poetic Vigils' as short and sweet as can be desired; only have an eye on the proof, that the printer do not substitute Virgils, which would ill accord with your modesty or meaning. Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling, and modern enough in phrase,—a good modern antique; but the matter of it is germain to the purpose only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The first title was liable to this

objection—that if you were disposed to enlarge it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in two tomes, how oddly it would sound, 'A Volume of Verse in two Volumes, Second Edition,' &c.! You see thro' my wicked intention of curtailing this epistolet by the above device of large margin. But in truth the idea of letterising has been oppressive to me of late above your candour to give me credit for. There is Southey, whom I ought to have thanked a fortnight ago for a present of the 'Church Book:' I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest even to acknowledge it by six words; and yet I am accounted by some people a good man. How cheap that character is acquired! Pay your debts, don't borrow money, nor twist your kitten's neck off, or disturb a congregation, &c., your business is done. I know things (thoughts or things—thoughts are things) of myself which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once * * *, and set a dog upon a crab's leg that was shoved out under a mass of sea-weeds,—a pretty little feeler. Oh! pah! how sick I am of that; and a lie, a mean one, I once told. I stink in the midst of respect. I am much hypt. The fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope; or if not, I am better than a poor shell-fish—not morally, when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits. Things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects, and impute it to the wintry solstice.

"C. Lamb."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

[No date.]

"Dear B. B.,—I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my skull to fill it; but you expect something and shall have a notelet. Is Sunday, not divinely speaking, but humanly and holidaysically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged taskmasters have given us a leisure day so often, think you, as once in a month? or, if it had not been instituted, might they not have given us every sixth day? Solve me this problem. If we are to go three times a-day to church, why has Sunday slipt into the notion of a *holli*day? A Holy-day,

I grant it. The Puritans, I have read in Southey's book, knew the distinction. They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery-maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But *then*—they gave the people a holliday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No!—he would turn the six days into sevenths,

> 'And those three smiling seasons of the year
> Into a Russian winter.'—OLD PLAY.

"I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not unpleasant—to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathise with pain, short of some terrible surgical operation? Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that not only he does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his meaning. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration of self-attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends, &c.—more complex things, in which the sufferer's feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate it and plane it. What is all this to your letter? I felt it to be a good one, but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are anything but answers. So you still want a motto? You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of (for a title) Religio Tremuli? or Tremebundi? There is Religio Medici and Laici. But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough, or exclusively so, for it. Your own 'Vigils' is perhaps the best. While I have space, let me congratulate with you the return of spring—what a summery spring too! all those qualms about the dog and cray-fish[1] melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

"A hasty farewell,

"C. LAMB."

[1] [See the preceding letter.]

Requested by the Quaker Poet, to advise him on a proposal for appropriating a large sum of money raised by a few admiring friends to his comfort in advancing years, Lamb gave his wise and genial judgment in the following letter :—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 24th, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offer'd. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical Ministry—nothing worse —the Minister is worthy of the hire.—The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth, and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word light, which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation—

1 2 1 2
'Make my *dark heavy* poem, *light* and *light*.'

where two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's 'Cases of Conscience' and Jeremy Taylor's 'Ductor Dubitantium,' the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages, and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons pro and con which they give for every possible case, you will be —— just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best Casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth in the

pleasant comedy of 'Wild Oats,' has it, 'there is no harm in a Guinea.' *A fortiori* there is less in 2000.

"I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the Bank; but in either case do not refuse an honest Service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily.

"C. L."

Between March and May, 1824, there is a gap, in which our only befriending light is a single note to Mrs. Allsop. It is rather important, too, though brief, since it acquaints us with the fact that the Lambs were having Manning as their guest, and that Wordsworth was in town. Emma Isola was shortly expected—perhaps when Manning left.

On one of Lamb's occasional visits to Cambridge, about 1817, perhaps a little later (he was there in 1820), he met at the house of Mrs. Paris, sister of Mr. Ayrton, with a little girl, who, being in a manner alone in the world, engaged the Lambs' sympathy, and soon riveted their affections. Emma Isola was the daughter of Mr. Charles Isola, who had been one of the esquire bedells of the University; she was born in 1809; her grandfather, Agostino Isola, had been compelled to fly from Milan, because a friend took up an English book in his apartment, which he had carelessly left in view. This good old man numbered among his pupils Gray the poet, Mr. Pitt, and, in his old age, Wordsworth whom he instructed in the Italian language. His little grand-daughter, at the time when she had the good fortune to win the regard of Mr. Lamb, had lost both her parents, and was spending her holidays with an aunt, who lived with Mrs. Paris, at whose house Lamb generally played his evening rubber during his stay at Cambridge. The liking which both Lamb and his sister took for the little orphan, led to their begging her of her aunt for the next holidays; their regard for her increased; she regularly spent the holidays with them till she left school, and afterwards was adopted as a daughter. Lamb was fond of taking long walks in the country, and as Miss Lamb's strength was not always equal to these pedestrian

excursions. Miss Isola became his constant companion in walks which even extended "to the green fields of pleasant Hertfordshire."

TO MRS. ALLSOP.

"India House, 13th April, 1824.

"Dear Mrs. A.,—Mary begs me to say how much she regrets we cannot join you to Reigate: our reasons are—1st, I have but one holyday, namely Good Friday, and it is not pleasant to solicit for another, but that might have been got over. 2ndly, Manning is with us, soon to go away, and we should not be easy in leaving him. 3rdly, our school-girl Emma comes to us for a few days on Thursday. 4thly and lastly, Wordsworth is returning home in about a week, and out of respect to them we should not like to absent ourselves just now. In summer I shall have a month, and, if it shall suit, should like to go for a few days of it with you both anywhere. In the meantime, with many acknowledgments, &c. &c.,

"I remain, yours (both) truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Remember Sundays."

The letters to Barton, which next occur, are on the whole the most interesting of those directed to that friend. They comprehend Lamb's enlightened and appreciative views on the 'Pictor Ignotus,' William Blake, remarks on the death of Byron, whom he compares with Wordsworth, some valuable criticisms on the Quaker poet's own productions, as well as on Bloomfield and Shelley, for the latter of whom Lamb once more evinces his not solitary distaste, and a variety of other items, including a complaint of weak eyes:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

[May 15, 1824?][1]

"Dear B. B.[2]—I am oppressed with business all day, and Company all night. But I will snatch a quarter of an

[1] [Evidently written shortly after the receipt of the news of Byron's death; but there is no date, and the postmark is scarcely legible.]

[2] [Printed, but imperfectly and incorrectly, in Cunningham's "Lives

hour. Your recent acquisitions of the Picture and the Letter are greatly to be congratulated. I too have a picture of my father [1] and the copy of his first love verses; [2] but they have been mine long.[3] Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he is still living.[4] He is the Robert [William] Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the 'Night Thoughts,' which you may have seen, in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass (fac Simile to itself) left behind on the dying bed. He paints in water colours marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain, which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon—he has seen the Beautifullest, the strongest, & the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen his paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael & Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions & prophetic visions with themself [himself]. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of them practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art, and affirms that all the while he was engaged in his Welsh paintings, Titian was disturbing him, Titian the Ill Genius of Oil Painting. His Pictures—one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims (far above Stothard)—have great merit, but hard, dry, yet with grace. He has written a Catalogue [5] of them with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of Vision. His poems have been sold hitherto only in Manu-

of the Painters," ed. 1879, iii. 416. "Charles Lamb had communicated to James Montgomery's book on Chimney-sweepers the little song by Blake, which I have already quoted; it touched the feelings of Bernard Barton so deeply that he made inquiries of his friend about the author, upon which he received the following letter."—*Cunningham.*]

[1] [That engraved in Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866.]

[2] See my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, 149.

[3] [Lamb had acquired them by the death of his brother John at this juncture. See *post.*]

[4] [Blake survived till 1828.]

[5] [A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures painted by himself, 12mo., 1809.]

script. I never read them; but a friend[1] at my desire procured the 'Sweep Song.' There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning—

> 'Tiger, Tiger, burning bright,
> Thro' the deserts of the night,'

which is glorious, but, alas! I have not the book; for the man is flown, whither I know not[2]—to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. Montgomery's book I have not much hope from, and the Society, with the affected name, has been laboring at it for these 20 years, & made few converts. I think it was injudicious to mix stories avowedly colour'd by fiction with the sad true statements from the parliamentary records, &c. But I wish the little Negroes all the good that can come from it. I batter'd my brains (not butter'd them—but it is a bad *a*) for a few verses for them, but I could make nothing of it. You have been luckier. But Blake's are the flower of the set, you will, I am sure, agree, tho' some of Montgomery's at the end are pretty; but the Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.

"With the exception of an Epilogue for a Private Theatrical, I have written nothing new for near 6 months. It is in vain to spur me on. I must wait. I cannot write without a genial impulse, & I have none. 'Tis barren all & dearth. No matter; life is something without scribbling. I have got rid of my bad spirits, & hold up pretty well this rain-damn'd May.

"So we have lost another Poet.[3] I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his real *power*, which his admirers talk of. Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit! Byron can only move the Spleen.[4] He was at

[1] [Probably James Montgomery, for his Album. See note 2, p. 175.]
[2] [He was living in obscurity and indigence, and so died.]
[3] [Lord Byron died April 19, 1824.]
[4] ["Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and Lloyd."
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.]

best a Satyrist. In any other way, he was mean enough. I daresay I do him injustice; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory. He did not like the world, and he has left it, as Alderman Curtis advised the Radicals, 'if they don't like their Country, damn 'em, let 'em leave it,' they possessing no rood of ground in England, and he 10,000 acres. Byron was better than many Curtises.

"Farewell, & accept this apology for a letter from one who owes you so much in that kind.

"Yours ever truly, "C. L.

"B. Barton, Esq., Woodbridge, Suffolk."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 7th, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your very pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. '*Abroad*' and '*lord*' are vile rhymes notwithstanding, and if you count you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly*—thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid it in future lustily. "Time' is fine; but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and, after a long day's smarting fatigue, which has almost put out my eyes (not blind however to your merits), I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much of singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Nayler is more to my fancy.

"My eye runs waters. But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one in more than one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, too ostentatious; a simple pipe preferable.

"Farewell, and many thanks.

"C. Lamb."

He continued in the next his strictures on Shelley, and quoted Hazlitt's judgment of that writer in corroboration of his opinion. He also describes the extraordinary scenes at their former quarters, and promises Barton some verses for his daughter's album.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—I congratulate you on getting a house over your head. I find the comfort of it, I am sure. At my town lodgings the mistress was always quarrelling with our maid: at my place of rustication the whole family were always beating one another: brothers beating sisters (one, a most beautiful girl, lamed for life): fathers beating sons and daughters, and son, again, beating his father—knocking him fairly down—a scene I never before witnessed, but was called out of bed by the unnatural blows, the parricidal colour of which though my morals could not but condemn, yet my reason did heartily approve; and in the issue the house was quieter for a day or two than I had ever known. I am now all harmony and quiet, even to the sometimes wishing back again some of the old rufflings. There is something stirring in these civil broils.

"The Album shall be attended to. If I can light upon a few appropriate rhymes (but rhymes come with difficulty from me now) I shall beg a place in the next margin of your young housekeeper.

"The 'Prometheus,' *unbound*, is a capital story. The literal rogue! What if you had ordered 'Elfrida,' in *sheets!* she'd have been sent up, I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his Bible (*i.e.* to his bosom), he'd have clapt on a brass clasp, no doubt.

"I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is 'thin sown with profit or delight.' Yet I must point to your notice a sonnet conceived and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion—(for hate demands a return as much as love, and starves without it)—is most arch and pleasant. Pray, like it very much. For his

theories and nostrums, they are oracular enough, but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is 'miching malice' and mischief in 'em, but, for the most part, ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em—'Many are the wiser and better for reading Shakespear, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Shelley.' I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head aches at the bare thought of letter-writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shivering up in the candle flame, like parching martyrs. The same indisposition to write it is has stopt my 'Elias,' but you will see a futile effort in the next number, 'wrung from me with slow pain.' The fact is, my head is seldom cool enough. I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do anything—to order me a new coat, for instance, though my old buttons are shelled like beans—is an effort. My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool craniums those old inditers of folios must have had, what a mortified pulse! Well; once more I throw myself on your mercy. Wishing peace in thy new dwelling,

"C. LAMB."

The pleasant interchange of friendly visits between Lamb and Cary still continued; but the latter now usually received his distinguished guest at the Museum on Wednesdays—every third Wednesday, at all events, after a while.

TO THE REV. H. F. CARY.

"East India House, August 19th, 1824.

"Dear Sir,—I shall have much pleasure in dining with you on Wednesday next, with much shame that I have not noticed your kind present of the 'Birds,'[1] which I found very chirping and whimsical. I believe at the time I was daily thinking of paying you a visit, and put it off—till I should come. Somehow it slipt, and [I] must crave your pardon.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB."

[1] [Mr. Cary's version of the "Birds" of Aristophanes, just published, 8vo., 1824.]

Mr. Barton received the verses for his daughter's album with the accompanying letter beneath. Surely the neat loveliness of female Quakerism never received before so delicate a compliment! The writer was mistaken in his guess as to the young lady's name, however; it was Lucy.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"THE ALBUM OF HANNAH [LUCY] BARTON.

Little book, surnamed of *white*,
Clean as yet, and fair to sight,
Keep thy attribution right.

Never disproportion'd scrawl,
Ugly, old (that's worse than all,)
On thy maiden clearness fall!

In each letter here design'd,
Let the reader emblem find
Neatness of the owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin;
Let thy leaves attraction win
By the golden rules within;

Sayings fetch'd from sages old;
Laws which Holy Writ unfold,
Worthy to be graved in gold:

Lighter fancies: not excluding
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure:
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense;
Darker meanings of offence;
What but *shades*—be banish'd hence!

Whitest thoughts, in whitest dress,
Candid meanings best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress."

"Dear B. B.,—'I am ill at these numbers;' but if the above be not too mean to have a place in thy daughter's sanctum, take them with pleasure. I assume that her name is Hannah, because it is a pretty scriptural cognomen.

"I began on another sheet of paper; and just as I had penned the second line of stanza two, an ugly blot fell, to illustrate my counsel.[1] I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears, and makes it worse. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger. Well, I hope and trust thy tick doleru, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that tick, and do altogether hate it, as an unpaid score, or the tick of a death-watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus's dance (I omit the sanctity, writing to 'one of the men called Friends'). I knew a young lady who could dance no other; she danced it through life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps.

"Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the foul fiend, who delights to lead after false fires in the night, Flibbertigibbet, that gives the web, and I forget what else.

"From my den, as Bunyan has it, 30th Sep. 1824.

"C. L."

Here is an expostulation with Coleridge for carrying away a book from the Cottage, in the absence of its inmates. It begins something peremptorily and irately, but soon subsides into smoother tones.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

[1824.]

"Dear C.,—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid Becky brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was 'Luster's Tables,' which, for some time, I could not make out. 'What! has he carried away any of the *tables*,

[1] [As to the *whiteness* of the book.]

Becky?' 'No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables.'[1] I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine: it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I. So I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy; there's a copy of More's fine poem,[2] which is none of mine; but I cherish it as my own; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the 'Polemical

[1] [Luther's "Table Talk," translated by Captain Henry Bell, folio, 1652.]

[2] ["Psychoria Platonica; or, A Platonick Song of the Soul," by Henry More, 8vo, 1642. He speaks of it as *a poem* and as a friend's book, otherwise Lamb seems to have had in his own collection only More's "Philosophical Writings," 1712, and his "Great Mystery of Godliness," 1662. See my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 301.]

Discourses,' and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and books I mean —my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth. "Your wronged friend,

"C. LAMB."

Letters to Mr. J. D. Collier and his son John Payne Collier have already presented themselves. It is a family of which Mr. Crabb Robinson's "Diary" admits us to an interesting and almost (till then) unhoped for knowledge. Both Lamb and his sister corresponded with the Colliers. Here is an amusing letter about a presentation-pig, a subject which has ere now yielded good fruit. It was addressed to Mrs. Collier, mother of the antiquary, at Smallfield Place, East Grinstead, whither they had perhaps retired from Hatton Garden.

TO MRS. COLLIER.[1]

[Nov. 2, 1824.]

"Dear Mrs. Collier,—We receive so much pig from your kindness, that I really have not phrase enough to vary successive acknowledgments.

"I think I shall get a printed form to serve on all occasions.

"To say it was young, crisp, short, luscious, dainty-toed, is but to say what all its predecessors have been. It was eaten on Tuesday and Monday, and doubts only exist as to which temperature it eat best, hot or cold. I incline to the latter. The Petty-feet made a pretty surprising præ-gustation for supper on Saturday night, just as I was loathingly in expectation of brencheese. I spell as I speak.

"I do not know what news to send you. You will have heard of Alsager's death, and your son John's success in the Lottery. I say he is a wise man if he leaves off while

[1] [S. K. M., Forster Coll., with several others now first correctly printed.]

he is well. The weather is wet to weariness; but Mary goes puddling about a-shopping after a gown for the winter. She wants it good and cheap. Now I hold that no good things are cheap, pig-presents always excepted. In this mournful weather I sit moping, where I now write, in an office dark as Erebus, jammed in between four walls, and writing by Candle-Light, most melancholy. Never see the light of the sun six hours in the day; and am surprised to find how pretty it shines on Sundays. I wish I were a Caravan driver, or a Penny postman, to earn my bread in air & sunshine. Such a pedestrian as I am, to be tied by the legs, like a Fauntleroy, without the pleasure of his Exactions! I am interrupted here with an official question which will take me up till it's time to go to dinner. So with repeated thanks & both our kindest remembrances to Mr. Collier and yourself, I conclude in haste,

"Yours & his sincerely,

"C. LAMB.

"On further enquiry Alsager is not dead; but Mrs. A. is bro^t to bed.

"From my Den in Leadenhall, 2nd Nov., '24."

A few days later, Lamb despatched a letter apologizing for not having called on the Procters after their marriage.

TO MR. PROCTER.[1]

"Leadenhall, Nov. 11th, '24.

"My dear Procter,—I do agnise[2] a shame in not having been to pay my congratulations to Mrs. Procter and your happy self; but on Sunday (my only morning) I was engaged to a country walk; and in virtue of the hypostatical union between us, when Mary calls, it is understood that I call too, we being univocal.

"But indeed I am ill at these ceremonious inductions. I fancy I was not born with a call on my head, though I

[1] [Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866, p. 178.]
[2] [A pun is intended, of course.]

have brought one down upon it with a vengeance. I love not to pluck that sort of fruit crude, but to stay its ripening into visits. In probability Mary will be at Southampton Row this morning, and something of that kind be matured between you; but in any case not many hours shall elapse before I shake you by the hand.

"Meantime give my kindest felicitations to Mrs. Procter, and assure her I look forward with the greatest delight to our acquaintance. By the way, the deuce a bit of cake has come to hand, which hath an inauspicious look at first, but I comfort myself that that Mysterious Service hath the property of Sacramental Bread, which mice cannot nibble, nor time moulder.

"I am married myself—to a severe step-wife—who keeps me, not at bed and board, but at desk and board, and is jealous of my morning aberrations. I cannot slip out to congratulate kinder unions. It is well she leaves me alone o'nights—the damn'd Day-hag *Business*. She is even now peeping over me to see I am writing no Love Letters. I come, my dear—Where is the Indigo Sale Book?

"Twenty adieus, my dear friends, till we meet.

"Yours most truly,

"C. LAMB."

It was on the same day that a very singular letter was addressed to Miss Hutchinson "from *Desk*," in which Procter's marriage is named, and an anecdote about Coleridge, who had gone for a sea-change to Ramsgate with Mr. and Mrs. Gilman, the former of whom had poisoned his blood in some recent professional case. The letter of Lamb must be read with one from Coleridge to Allsop of October 20th, 1821. "We had promised our dear friends the Monkhouses —promised ourselves rather—a visit to them at Ramsgate; but I thought it best, and Mary seemed to have it at heart too, not to go far from home these last holydays. . . . She certainly has escaped her sad yearly visitation, . . . and we have to be thankful for a good 1824." He proceeds to explain that they had made from Islington sundry little trips to Ware, Watford, &c., "to try how the trout tasted, for a night out or so." It was in the summer, at dinner

with a clergyman at Hertford, that the episode in connection with Coleridge took place. The gentleman in holy orders, who had been at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and Coleridge, excepted to the moral character of the philosopher. Lamb did his best to enlighten and correct him, but to little purpose. "Was it not well known," quoth he, "that Coleridge at that very moment was living in a state of open adultery with Mrs. Gilman at Highgate?" "Of course," Lamb continues, "you will keep this quite close, for I would not involve my poor blundering friend, who, I daresay, believed it all thoroughly.[1] My interference of course was imputed to the goodness of my heart . . . . O Southey, Southey, how long would it be before you would find one of us Unitarians propagating such unwarrantable scandal?"

There is a postscript by Lamb to a letter from his sister to the same lady, existing in fragmentary state,[2] which reminds us of the Letter in the "Reflector" of Edax On Appetite, and of the pretence of *gourmandise* in another belonging to this correspondence, directed to Mr. Chambers of Leamington in 1818. The piece of paper, which owes its preservation to the fact that it was given away as a specimen of handwriting, runs just thus: ". . . . of mine

[1] [Side by side with the ludicrous hallucination of this precious clerical worthy should be read Coleridge's beautiful account of Mrs. Gilman in the postscript of a letter to Allsop of April 10th, 1820:—"Of all women I ever knew, Mrs. G. is the woman who seems to have been framed by Nature for a heroine in that rare species of love which subsists in a triunity of the heart, the moral sense, and the faculty corresponding to what Spurzheim calls the organ of *Ideality*. . . . ." Whatever we may feel about Coleridge's want of practical stability, those who have studied his life with a competent knowledge of his unique intellectual structure will scarcely fail to conclude that his position throughout his career was a false and cruel position. Allsop ("Recollections," &c., ed. 1864, p. 121, note) observes, in reference to the narrow and sordid conduct of the ever-illustrious thinker's family towards him:—"Cleverness was not at all a characteristic of Coleridge, while it happily suits those to whom Wordsworth alluded, who are or have been clever enough to appropriate their uncle's great reputation to their own advancement, and then to allow him to seek assistance from strangers." No one who knows the character or calibre of mind, whether of the Bishop or the Judge, can doubt, *cæteris paribus*, that the one would still have been a curate and the other a barrister with but little practice, had they borne the name of Smith—had they wanted the passport of *his* name.]

[2] ["Notes and Queries," 5th Series, iii. 387.]

great eating—by great here is signified not quantity so much as quality. Apropos of birds, the other day, at a large dinner, being called upon for a toast, I gave, as the best toast I knew, 'Woodcock toast,' which was drunk with 3 cheers.

"Yours affectionately,

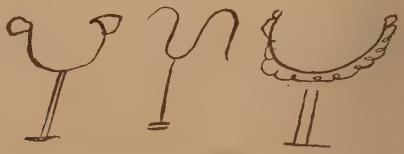
"C. LAMB."

What a strange mingling of humour and solemn truth is there in the following reflection on Fauntleroy's fate, in a letter (with its grotesque sketches) addressed to Bernard Barton? The gentleman at Canton was not Manning, but Ball.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dec. 1st, 1824.

"Dear B. B.,—If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, &c.[1] I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject; but he will probably consult his own taste after all.



[1] [The Chinese undertook to execute commissions for china services, and also paint the heraldic bearings on each piece, if desired. The latter operation was not usually very artistic from an European point of view.]

"The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is Inspector of Teas, his name is Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

"Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2*s.* 6*d.* are prudently going to raise their price another shilling;[1] and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the 'New Monthly,' they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like George Dyer multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance.

"And now, my dear sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as, by a parity of situation, are exposed to a similarity of temptation.[2] My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual, with the change of theme. Who, that standeth, knoweth but he may yet fall? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into others' property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence; but so thought Fauntleroy once; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated as he hath done. You are as yet upright; but you are a banker—at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject; but cash must pass through your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour—— but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presby-

[1] [The magazine had been enlarged since March, 1823.]

[2] [Yet Lamb probably had no suspicion that in one of his literary associates, and a man whom he was fond of calling "the light-hearted Janus," lurked one of the darkest villains of modern times, the poisoner Wainewright. See my little volume, 1880, "Introduction."]

terian or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone, not to mention higher considerations! I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law, at one time of their life, made as sure of never being hanged as I, in my presumption, am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears? Are we unstrangulable, I ask you? Think of these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something), but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, &c. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble.

"C. L."

In the year 1824, one of Lamb's last ties to the theatre, as a scene of present enjoyment, was severed. Munden, the rich peculiarities of whose acting he has embalmed in one of his Elian papers, quitted the stage in the mellowness of his powers. His relish for Munden's acting was almost a new sense; he did not compare him with the old comedians, as having common qualities with them, but regarded him as altogether of a different and original style. On the last night of his appearance, Lamb was very desirous to attend, but every place in the boxes had long been secured; and Lamb was not strong enough to stand the tremendous rush, by enduring which he could alone hope to obtain a place in the pit; when Munden's gratitude for his exquisite praise anticipated his wish, by providing for him and Miss Lamb places in a corner of the orchestra, close to the stage. The play of the "Poor Gentleman," in which Munden played "Sir Robert Bramble," had concluded, and the audience were impatiently waiting for the farce, in which the great comedian was to delight them for the last time, when my attention was suddenly called to Lamb by Miss Kelly, who sat with my party far withdrawn into the obscurity of one of the upper boxes, but overlooking the radiant hollow which waved below us. In his hand, directly beneath the line of stage-lights, glistened a huge porter-pot, which he was draining; while the broad

face of old Munden was seen thrust out from the door by which the musicians enter, watching the close of the draught, when he might receive and hide the portentous beaker from the gaze of the admiring neighbours. Some unknown benefactor had sent four pots of stout to keep up the veteran's heart during his last trial; and, not able to drink them all, he bethought him of Lamb, and without considering the wonder which would be excited in the brilliant crowd who surrounded him, conveyed himself the cordial chalice to Lamb's parched lips. At the end of the same farce, Munden found himself unable to deliver from memory a short and elegant address which one of his sons had written for him; but, provided against accidents, he took it from his pocket, wiped his eyes, put on his spectacles, read it, and made his last bow. This was, perhaps, the latest occasion on which Lamb took a hearty interest in the present business scene; for though he went now and then to the theatre to gratify Miss Isola, or to please an author who was his friend, his real stage henceforth only spread itself out in the selectest chambers of his memory.

CHAPTER VIII.

EMANCIPATION FROM THE INDIA HOUSE—LETTERS TO BARTON, NOVELLO, ALLSOP, MISS HUTCHINSON, THE WORDSWORTHS—HAZLITT'S "SPIRIT OF THE AGE."

[1825.]

THE year 1825 is marked by one of the principal events in Lamb's uneventful life—his retirement from the drudgery of the desk, with a pension equal to two-thirds of his now liberal salary. The following letters vividly exhibit his hopes and his apprehensions before he received this noble boon from the East India Company, and his bewilderment of pleasure when he found himself in reality free. He has recorded his feelings in one of the most beautiful of his "Last Essays of Elia," entitled "The Superannuated Man;" but it will be interesting to contemplate them, "living as they rose," in the unstudied letters to which this chapter is mainly devoted.

A New Series of the "London Magazine" commenced with this year; but the spirit of the work had evaporated, as often happens to periodical works, as the store of rich fancies with which its contributors had begun, was in a measure exhausted. Lamb contributed a "Memoir of Liston," who occasionally enlivened Lamb's evening parties with his society; and who, besides the interest which he derived from his theatrical fame, was recommended to Lamb by the cordial admiration he expressed for Munden, whom he used to imitate in a style delightfully blending his own humour with that of his sometime rival. The "Memoir" is altogether a fiction.[1]

Among the very few letters from Coleridge to Lamb, which are extant, is one of the present year, or possibly of 1826, in which Lamb is charged by his correspondent with

[1] [It is printed in "Eliana," ed. 1883, p. 400.]

the authorship of the "Odes and Addresses to Great Men," 1825; nor, although Gilman had mentioned the rumour that the book was the joint production of Hood and Hamilton Reynolds, could Coleridge persuade himself, even upon a re-perusal, that it was not written by Charles.[1]

The following letters to the Editor of the "London" and to Miss Hutchinson at Torquay, refer among other matters, to some of Lamb's later articles in the Magazine. He exults in his veracious "Memoir of Liston!"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "LONDON MAGAZINE."[2]

[January, 1825.]

"Dear Sir,—I send you a bantering 'Epistle to an Old Gentleman whose Education is supposed to have been neglected.' Of course, it was *suggested* by some letters of your admirable Opium-Eater,[3] the discontinuance of which has caused so much regret to myself in common with most of your readers. You will do me injustice by supposing that, in the remotest degree, it was my intention to ridicule those papers. The fact is, the most serious things may give rise to an innocent burlesque; and, the more serious they are, the fitter they become for that purpose. It is not to be supposed that Charles Cotton did not entertain a very high regard for Virgil, notwithstanding he travestied that poet. Yourself can testify the deep respect I have always held for the profound learning and penetrating genius of our friend. Nothing upon earth would give me greater pleasure than to find that he has not lost sight of his entertaining and instructive purpose.

"I am, dear sir, yours and *his* sincerely,

"ELIA."

[1] [See the letter of Coleridge printed from a transcript in Hood's hand in the "Memorials of Hood," 1860, vol. i., p. 16. Hood was quite a young man when he published the "Odes and Addresses;" it was the book which gave his countrymen the earliest indication of his powers as a humourist.]

[2] ["London Magazine" for 1825, p. 95. The letter introduces the article.]

[3] [The Letters of De Quincey to a Young Man whose education had been neglected.]

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid repeated interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

"January 20th, 1825.

"Dear Miss H.,—Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that we used to pick-axe open, about this season, in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another goose pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a partridge. You ask about the editor of the 'London;' I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling. De Quincy's 'Parody' was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum*. The 'Horns' is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the 'Spectator.' I had signed it 'Jack Horner;' but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the 'Memoir of Liston'?—and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention, and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next number I figure as a theologian! and have attacked my late brethren the Unitarians.[1] What Jack Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me—

'Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
Some folks might call me sinner,

[1] [The paper entitled "Unitarian Protests."]

The one invented half a coat,
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,
And fitted to console one;
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one.'

"I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory; but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c. "ELIA."

The first dawning hope of Lamb's deliverance from the India House is suggested in the following note to Manning, proposing a visit, in which he refers to a certificate of non-capacity for hard desk-work, given by a medical friend. Lamb himself leads one to infer, from passages in letters of April 6th and 18th, that his hope of release dated from February in the same year.

TO MR. MANNING.

[February, 1825.]

"My dear M.,—You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw Tuthill[1] yesternight, who has done for me what may

'To all my nights and days to come,
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.'

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non*-capacitated (I cannot write it *in*-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurration of this to *anybody!*

"Mary's love. "C. LAMB."

[1] [An early friend of Lamb, to whom he was introduced either by Manning or Holcroft. He is the Sir George Tuthill with whom Manning was staying at Cavendish Square in 1833. See the letter from Lamb to the latter of December 5th, 1806.]

The following letter is of interest as containing a piece of contemporary criticism on Hazlitt's "Spirit of the Age," as well as his own notion of the character which the author had drawn of Elia. He completed his half century on the day when he wrote it. The paper of which Barton had complained was probably that entitled "A Vision of Horns," as he refers to it again in a letter to Barton of April 6th this year. He obscurely alludes to his retirement from the Office.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"February 10th, 1825.

"Dear B. B.,—I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault and my weakness that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake. The 'Spirit of the Age' is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, &c., he had done better in former publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, &c., but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than buy it. I have it. He has laid too many colours on my likeness; but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name, that I make a rule of accepting as much over-measure to Elia as gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on and spare not. Your gentleman brother sets my mouth a-watering after liberty. Oh, that I were kicked out of Leadenhall with every mark of indignity and a competence in my fob! The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about, purposeless as an idiot! The author-mometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not *thy*) world by a lying 'Life of Liston,' all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into newspapers, play-bills, &c., as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading the article (in our first number, new series). A life more improbable for him to have lived would not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with 'Dream on J. Bunyan,' checks me. I'd rather do

more in my favourite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and *not* Liston.[1] The second number is all trash. What are Taylor and Hessey about? Why did poor Scott die? There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of scribblers, some gone away, some affronted away; and I am left as the solitary widow looking for watercresses. The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the dramatists under the name of John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

"I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopt my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a letter.

"I will do something soon, if I can, as a peace-offering to the queen of the East Angles[2]—something she shan't scold about. For the present farewell.

"Thine, "C. L.

"I am fifty years old this day. Drink my health."

Freedom now gleamed on him, and he became restless with the approach of liberty.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 23rd, 1825.

"Dear B. B.,—I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself for weeks past—my single self, I by myself—I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation, that is to turn up my fortune; but round it rolls, and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of freedom, of becoming a gentleman at large; but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspense. Guess what an absorbing stake I feel it. I am not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The East India Directors alone can be that thing to me or not. I have just learned that

[1] [A glance at the anecdote of Liston and the Doctor.]
[2] [Lucy Barton.]

nothing will be decided this week. Why the next? Why any week? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers; I rub 'em against paper, and write to you, rather than not allay this scorbuta.

"While I can write, let me adjure you to have no doubts of IRVING.[1] Let Mr. Mitford drop his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a missionary subject, first part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful, cordial, and sincere. He there acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Christian Church, &c.—to the talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly), rather than to that of all the men living. This from him, the great dandled and petted sectarian—to a religious character so equivocal in the world's eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the Kirk's estimate—can this man be a quack? The language is as affecting as the spirit of the dedication. Some friend told him, 'This dedication will do you no good,' *i.e.*, not in the world's repute, or with your own people. 'That is a reason for doing it,' quoth Irving.

"I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, outspeaking, intrepid, and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras. You must like him.

"Yours, in tremors of painful hope,
"C. LAMB."

The dream was realised. In April, 1825, the desk-wearied clerk went home for ever—with what delight has

[1] [The eminent Presbyterian divine. He forms one of the subjects of Hazlitt's "Pulpit Oratory" in the "Liberal," which paper makes part of the gallery of contemporary portraits in the same writer's "Spirit of the Age." Carlyle thought very highly of Irving who, like himself, was a native of Dumfriesshire. See Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866, pp. 190-1.

"July 5th, 1824.—I dined in Castle Street [at Southerne's] and took tea at Lamb's. Mr. Irving and his friend Mr. Carlyle were there. An agreeable evening enough; but there is so little sympathy between Lamb and Irving, that I do not think they can or ought to be intimate."—*H. C. Robinson's Diary*, 1869, ii. 271.

I do not see any notice of Lamb in Mrs. Oliphant's "Life of Irving." This visit from Irving and Carlyle was paid while both, I believe, were residing at Pentonville. See Froude's Carlyle, i. 270, and Lamb's letter to Gilman of March 8th, 1830.]

been told in the elaborate raptures of his "Superannuated Man."

The following letters contain his own expressions of gratification on his deliverance, as conveyed to several of his dearest friends. In the first his happiness is a little checked by the death of a relation of Mrs. Wordsworth, Mr. Monkhouse, who had gradually won Lamb's affections, and who nobly deserved them.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Colebrook Cottage, 6th April, 1825.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me; but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators; for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety: £441, *i.e.*, £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

"I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.*, to have three times as much real time —time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys—their conscious fugitiveness;—the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary

wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

"Leigh Hunt and Montgomery,[1] after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned twenty miles; to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play-days: mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent!

"At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly; but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorbed all interest; in fact, it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman gave me my certificates; I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them. But my sister shook her head, and said it was all true. Indeed, this last winter I was jaded out—winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no day-light. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob—and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me.

"Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's 'Missionary Orations' to S. T. C. Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that

[1] [The imprisonment of the Hunts is too well known to require any further notice; but James Montgomery was imprisoned for publishing a "Letter on the People's Right to Universal Suffrage," by the Duke of Richmond. 8vo. 1817.]

it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet, among his own people, 'That is a reason for doing it,' was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

"Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the 'Church,' which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

"Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you —I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

"Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter!

"C. Lamb."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

[April 6th, 1825.]

"Dear B. B.,—My spirits are so tumultuary with the novelty of my recent emancipation, that I have scarce steadiness of hand, much more mind, to compose a letter. I am free, B. B.—free as air!

'The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty.'[1]

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock. I came home for ever!

"I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter, and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change; but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three-years' desk yester morning; and, deuce take me, if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry, sociable lads—at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag! The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure.

"B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds! I have got £441 net for life,

[1] [A quotation from memory of Lovelace's song "To Althea, from Prison."]

sanctioned by act of parliament, with a provision for Mary if she survives me. I will live another fifty years; or if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i.e.*, the time that is a man's own. Tell me how you like 'Barbara S.';[1] will it be received in atonement for the foolish 'Vision'—I mean by the lady? *A-propos*, I never saw Mrs. Crawford in my life; nevertheless it's all true of somebody.

"Address me, in future, Colebrooke Cottage, Islington. I am really nervous (but that will wear off), so take this brief announcement.

"Yours truly, "C. L."

In the letter to Wordsworth of April 6, Lamb in a manner promised to write separately to Miss Hutchinson, which he now did, but apparently not till that lady had asked for particulars.

TO MISS HUTCHINSON.

"April 18th, 1825.

"Dear Miss Hutchinson,—You want to know all about my gaol-delivery. Take it, then. About twelve weeks since I had a sort of intimation that a resignation might be well accepted from me. This was a kind bird's whisper. On that hint I spake. Gilman and Tuthill furnished me with certificates of wasted health and sore spirits—not much more than the truth, I promise you—and for nine weeks I was kept in a fright. I had gone too far to recede, and they might take advantage, and dismiss me with a much less sum than I had reckoned on. However, liberty came at last with a liberal provision. I have given up what I could have lived on in the country; but have enough to live here by management and scribbling occasionally. I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer

[1] [Miss Kelly, the supposed heroine of this story, has been mentioned before. She lived to a great age, and long survived her retirement from the stage. Compare the letter to Kenney of 1822, *suprâ*, and one to the editor of the "Table Book," under June, 1827, below. Talfourd, writing in 1837, observes: "The true heroine of this beautiful story is still living, though she has left the stage. It is enough to make a severer quaker than B. B. feel 'that there is some soul of goodness' in players."]

for £10,000 a year: seven years, after one is fifty, is no trifle to give up. Still I am a young *pensioner*, and have served but thirty-three years; very few, I assure you, retire before forty, forty-five, or fifty years' service.

"You will ask how I bear my freedom? Faith, for some days I was staggered, could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance: was confused, giddy: knew not whether I was on my head or my heel, as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands at a degree or two above CONTENT.

"I go about quiet, and have none of that restless hunting after recreation, which made holydays formerly uneasy joys. All being holydays, I feel as if I had none, as they do in heaven, where 'tis all red-letter days. I have a kind letter from the Wordsworths, *congratulatory* not a little. It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects, that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor Monkhouse more and more. I do not esteem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grown to esteem and value him. But words are vain. We have none of us to count upon many years. That is the only cure for sad thoughts. If only some died, and the rest were permanent on earth, what a thing a friend's death would be then!

"I must take leave, having put off answering a load of letters to this morning, and this alas! is the first. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Monkhouse,

"And believe us yours most truly,

"C. LAMB."

Two short letters to Novello and Allsop merely deal with passing domestic incidents; but Miss Lamb's cold seems to have been the precursor of a more serious illness.

TO VINCENT NOVELLO.[1]

[April 25th, 1825.]

"Dear Corelli,—My sister's cold is as obstinate as an old Handelian, whom a modern amateur is trying to convert to Mozart-ism. As company must, and always does, injure it, Emma and I propose to come to you in the evening of to-morrow, *instead of meeting here.* An early bread-and-cheese supper at half-past eight will oblige us. Loves to the bearer of many children. "C. LAMB.

"Tuesday. Colebrooke.

"I sign with a black seal, that you may [begin] to think her cold has killed Mary; which will be an agreeable unsurprise when you read the note.

"V. Novello, Esq., Green, Shacklewell."

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

"May 29th, 1825.

"Dear A.,—I am as mad as the devil—but I had engaged myself and Mary to accompany Mrs. Kenn[e]y to Kentish Town to dinner at a common friend's on Friday, before I knew of Mary's engaging to you.

"Can you and Mrs. A. exchange the day for Sunday, or what other?

"Write.

"Success to the Gnomes!

"C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

[1] [The Tom Pinch of "Elia." This and the following letters to Novello were presented by him in 1840 to the British Museum, and are now preserved in Add. MS. 11,730. In the original MS. of the "Sonnet In the album of Mrs. Jane Towers," now also in the British Museum (*loco citato*), there is this note: "The foregoing sonnet was written out by the friend and happy *wife* of Charles Clarke, for her dear father—Vincent Novello; also one of Charles Clarke's admirers, and his Best Friend." It is there subscribed thus: "Charles Lamb, Enfield Chase, 19th Dec. 1827."]

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

[Early in May, 1825.]

"Dear W.,—I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations! I may now date from the sixth week of my 'Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall.' I have lived so much in it, that a summer seems already past; and 'tis but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners! O the carking cares! O the money-grubbers! Sempiternal muckworms!

"Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont; I think that circumstance made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it?—and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

"Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay, by which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional £100, I fancy. His book, too, (Commentary on Bishop Leighton) is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

"In the 'London' which is just out (1st May), are two papers entitled the 'Superannuated Man,' which I wish you to see; and also, 1st April, a little thing called 'Barbara S——,' a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The L. M., if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

"I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenæ;* for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS.[1] But *couragio!* I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out; an anchorage for *age* and school of economy, when necessity comes; but without this latter I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction: else I do sometimes ruralise in fancy.

"Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d I only mean deuced. 'Tis these suitors

[1] [The third of his full pay.]

of Penelope that make it necessary to *authorise* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

"Excuse my abortive scribble.

"Yours, not in more haste than heart,

"C. L.

"Love and recollect^ns^ to all the Wms., Doras, Marys round your Wrekin.

"Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir George Beaumont, for I am shyish of applying to him."

How imperfectly the liberation, so rapturously hailed, fulfilled its promise; how Lamb left Islington for Enfield, and there, after a while, subsided into a lodger; and how, at last, he settled at Edmonton to die, will sufficiently appear in the succeeding portion of the correspondence, which is less important and interesting than the series from 1796 to 1825, and consists in far larger measure of notes and letterets (as the writer himself styled them) to his later acquaintances. The earlier correspondence was almost exclusively written at the India Office, whereas the residue was of course composed at home.

CHAPTER IX.

LETTERS TO BARTON, SOUTHEY, LEIGH HUNT, ROBINSON, COLERIDGE, ETC.

[1825-6.]

A LETTER written to Barton, almost in the honeymoon of his freedom, already speaks of illness and discomfort. He gives his opinion of some of his friend's verses.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 2nd, 1825.

"My dear B. B.,—My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the 'London' you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely than for the introduction you favoured us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs.* Anne Knight for the life of me. She is a very pleas——, but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves, because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest *remembrances* to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again, I count upon another pleasant Bridge walk with her. Tell her, I got home time for a rubber; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldlings.

"I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now; but I liked the dedication much, and the apology for your bald burying grounds. To Shelley—but *that* is not new. To the young vesper-singer, Great Bealings, Playford, and what not.

"If there be a cavil, it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated, till a sort of trite-

ness attends them. It seems as if you were for ever losing Friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often and so good in your parts? The topic taken from the consideration that they are snatched away from *possible vanities* seems hardly sound; for to an Omniscient eye their conditional failings must be one with their actual; but I am too unwell for theology.

"Such as I am,
"I am yours and A. K.'s truly,
"C. LAMB."

In this summer Lamb and his sister paid a long visit to Enfield. They had been recommended by the Allsops to some lodgings kept on the skirts of the Chase by Leishman, a tailor, and his wife. Enfield, where Keats was at school with Charles Clarke's father, through which channel he became known to Leigh Hunt and the whole literary set, must have been long familiar by name to Lamb, just as his first notion of going to Dalston had been in all likelihood suggested by the proximity of the Novellos at Shacklewell. It rather inconveniently happened that the Allsops themselves went down during the time; and the accommodating resources of the Leishmans might have been rather sorely tried; but the Allsops gave way. The letters to Barton and others, which come next, were written from Chase Side.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[July, 1825.]

"Dear Allsop,—We are bent upon coming here to-morrow for a few weeks. Despatch a Porter to me this evening, or by nine to-morrow morning, to say how far it will interfere with your proposed coming down on Saturday. If the house will hold us, we can be together while we stay.

"Yours,
"C. LAMB.

"Enfield, Thursday, after a hot walk."

TO THE SAME.

[July, 1825.]

"Dear Allsop,—It is too hot to write. Here we are, having turned you out of your beds, but willing to resign in your favour, or make any shifts with you. Our best Loves to Mrs. Allsop, from Mrs. Leishman's this warm Saturday. "Yours truly,

"C. Lamb.

"This damned afternoon sun! Thanks for your note, which came in more than good time."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 10th, 1825.

"We shall be soon again at Colebrooke.

"Dear B. B.,—You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I had rather talk with you and Anne Knight quietly at Colebrooke Lodge, over the matter of your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly —what I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural—devotional topics—admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer-books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

"I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic, insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors—but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child, what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is

false to say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, &c. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt acts by being snatched away at all tells in its favour. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse; but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying his eyes by seeing what we will do, when he knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemned before commission. In these things we grope and flounder; and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatch'd from vice (no great compliment to it, by the bye) let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day—fire-purified martyrs and torment-sifted confessors—what know we? We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply, and assign large revenues to minors, incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into paradise are sculptured out a penny a letter, twopence a syllable, &c. It is all a mystery; and the more I try to express my meaning (having none that is clear), the more I flounder. Finally, write what your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, deems best, and be careless about the whimsies of such a half-baked notionist as I am. We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropt the 'London.' It was indeed a dead weight. It had got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that is bad. Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K. and yourself, and strangers'-greeting to Lucy—is it Lucy or Ruth? —that gathers wise sayings in a Book.

"C. LAMB."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"August 19th, 1825.

"Dear Southey,—You'll know who this letter comes from by opening slap-dash upon the text, as in the good old times. I never could come into the custom of envelopes; 'tis a modern foppery; the Plinian correspondence gives no hint of such. In singleness of sheet and meaning, then, I thank you for your little book.' I am ashamed to add a codicil of thanks for your 'Book of the Church.' I scarce feel competent to give an opinion of the latter; I have not reading enough of that kind to venture at it. I can only say the fact, that I have read it with attention and interest. Being, as you know, not quite a Churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, from Druid extirpation downwards. I call all good Christians the Church, Capillarians and all. But I am in too light a humour to touch these matters. May all our churches flourish! Two things staggered me in the poem (and one of them staggered both of us), I cannot away with a beautiful series of verses, as I protest they are, commencing 'Jenner.' 'Tis like a choice banquet opened with a pill or an electuary—physic stuff. T'other is, we cannot make out how Edith should be no more than ten years old. By'r Lady, we had taken her to be some sixteen or upwards. We suppose you have only chosen the round number for the metre. Or poem and dedication may be both older than they pretend to; but then some hint might have been given; for, as it stands, it may only serve some day to puzzle the parish reckoning. But without inquiring further (for 'tis ungracious to look into a lady's years), the dedication is eminently pleasing and tender, and we wish Edith May Southey joy of it. Something, too, struck us as if we had heard of the death of John May.[1] A John May's death was a few years since in the papers. We think the tale one of the quietest, prettiest things we have seen. You have been temperate in the use of localities, which generally spoil poems laid in exotic regions. You mostly cannot stir out (in such things) for humming-birds and fire-flies. A tree

[1] [Southey's Lisbon friend.]

is a Magnolia, &c.—Can I but like the truly Catholic spirit? 'Blame as thou mayest the Papist's erring creed' —which and other passages brought me back to the old Anthology days and the admonitory lesson to 'Dear George' on 'The Vesper Bell,' a little poem which retains its first hold upon me strangely.

"The compliment to the translatress[1] is daintily conceived. Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote, impossible parallel,—as between a great empress and the inobtrusive quiet soul who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhoffered it all out, it puzzles my slender Latinity to conjecture. Why do you seem to sanction Landor's unfeeling allegorising away of honest Quixote? He may as well say Strap is meant to symbolise the Scottish nation before the Union, and Random since that act of dubious issue; or that Partridge means the Mystical Man, and Lady Bellaston typifies the Woman upon Many Waters. Gebir, indeed, may mean the state of the hop markets last month, for anything I know to the contrary. That all Spain overflowed with romancical books (as Madge Newcastle[2] calls them) was no reason that Cervantes should not smile at the matter of them; nor even a reason that, in another mood, he might not multiply them, deeply as he was tinctured with the essence of them. Quixote is the father of gentle ridicule, and at the same time the very depository and treasury of chivalry and highest notions. Marry, when somebody persuaded Cervantes that he meant only fun, and put him upon writing

[1] [Sara Coleridge, who had rendered into English Dobrizhoffer's account of the Abipones, 1822. See the letter to Barton of Feb. 17, 1823.

> "He was a man of rarest qualities,
> Who to this barbarous region had confined
> A spirit with the learned and the wise
> Worthy to take its place, and from mankind
> Receive their homage, to the immortal mind
> Paid in its just inheritance of fame,
> * * * * *
> And *Dobrizhoffer* was the good man's honour'd name."
>
> SOUTHEY'S *Tale of Paraguay*.]

[2] [Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle.]

that unfortunate Second Part with the confederacies of that unworthy duke and most contemptible duchess, Cervantes sacrificed his instinct to his understanding.

"We got your little book but last night, being at Enfield, to which place we came about a month since, and are having quiet holydays. Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'Tis all holiday with me now, you know. The change works admirably.

"For literary news, in my poor way, I have a one-act farce going to be acted at Haymarket; but when? is the question. 'Tis an extravaganza, and like enough to follow 'Mr. H.' 'The London Magazine' has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen. My ambition is not at present higher than to write nonsense for the playhouses, to eke out a something contracted income. *Tempus erat.* There was a time, my dear Cornwallis, when the Muse, &c. But I am now in Mac Fleckno's predicament,—

'Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce.'

"Coleridge is better (was, at least, a few week's since) than he has been for years. His accomplishing his book at last has been a source of vigour to him. We are on a half visit to his friend Allsop, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Enfield, but expect to be at Colebrooke Cottage in a week or so, where, or anywhere, I shall be always most happy to receive tidings from you. G. Dyer is in the height of an uxorious paradise. His honeymoon will not wane till he wax cold. Never was a more happy pair, since Acme and Septimius, and longer. Farewell, with many thanks, dear S. Our loves to all round your Wrekin.

"Your old friend, "C. Lamb."

The farce referred to in this letter was founded on Lamb's essay "On the Inconvenience of being Hanged." It was, perhaps, too slight for the stage, and never was honoured by a trial, but was ultimately published in "Blackwood's Magazine."

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[August, 1825.]

"My dear Allsop,—Mrs. Leishman gives us hopes of seeing you all on Sunday. We shall provide a bit of beef or something on that day, so you need not market. We are very comfortable here. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Allsop and the chits. We lying-in people go out on Saturday, Mrs. L. bids me say, and that you may come that evening and find beds, &c.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"Thursday."

TO THE SAME.

[September, 1825.]

"Dear A.,—Mary is afraid lest the calico & handkerchiefs have miscarried which you were to send. Have you sent 'em?

"Item, a bill with 'em, including the former silks, & balance struck in a tradesman-like way.

"Yours truly, "C. L.

"Enfield."

As Lamb had prepared Allsop to expect, they returned to Islington early in September.

TO THE SAME.

"My dear Allsop,—We are exceedingly grieved for your loss. When your note came, my sister went to Pall Mall, to find you, and saw Mrs. L., and was a little comfited to find Mrs. A. had returned to Enfield before the distressful event. I am very feeble. Can scarce move a pen; got home from Enfield on the Friday. And on Monday following was laid up with a most violent nervous fever—second this summer; have had leeches to my temples; have not had, nor can get, a night's sleep. So you will excuse more from "Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"Islington, 9th Sept. [1825].

"Our most kind remembrances to poor Mrs. Allsop. A line to say how you both are will be most acceptable."

During 1825 Lamb and Hone saw a good deal of each other, and several notes passed between them. The "Every Day Book" was in progress, and although Lamb does not appear to have contributed much to it, his interest in its success was warm and steady. The discontinuance of official duties had, as we have seen, involved a long negotiation and suspense, and in the autumn of the year the manumitted clerk, as the result perhaps of the powerful reaction, was (as the last letter to Allsop and others below to him and Hone testify) for a length of time seriously ill. Hone, under October 5th, "St. Placidus," introduced a contribution from his distinguished friend, who had turned to good account his reading of Collier's "Poetical Decameron,"[1] by saying in reference to a paper on the same topic in a previous number, "The cantering of TIM TIMS startles him who told of his youthful days at the school, wherein poor Starkey cyphered part of his little life. C. L. 'getting well, but weak,' from painful and severe indisposition, is 'off and away' for a short excursion. Better health to him, and good be to him all his life! Here he is. [Here follows the heading of the Essay.] 'THE ASS.'" Lamb, when he got the Number, wrote to Hone, facetiously expostulating. "My friends," he says, under date of October 25th, 1825, "are fairly surprised that you should set me down so unequivocally for an ass as you have done. . . . Call you that friendship?"

Lamb enjoyed the contents of the "Every Day Book," and had the work regularly sent to him number by number. In a letter of August 12th, 1825, he observes:—"Your books are right acceptable. I did not write further about Dogget, because on second thoughts the book I mean does not refer to him." He adds:—"A coach from the Bell, or Bell and Crown, sets off to Enfield at half-past four. Put yourself in it to-morrow afternoon, and come to us; take a bed at an inn, and waste all Sunday with us. We desire to show you the country here. If we are out when you come, the maid is instructed to keep you upon tea and proper bread and butter till we come home." He concludes by telling him that there were also Edmonton coaches from

[1] [Compare the letter of 1821 to Collier *supra*, and the note.]

Bishopsgate every half-hour, and that the walk thence to Enfield was easy, across the fields a mile and a half. Curiously enough, Lamb posted this letter to Hone; but a friend, who happened to be coming up, took to him a second by hand, in order that he might get it sooner. In both Lamb asked for the Number of the "Every Day Book," which had the article by T. Ray in it, and which had somehow miscarried.

But at the end of September, 1825, there was a piteous account of both to Hone, written from Islington, whither the Lambs had returned, he worse than he went, and his sister upset by worry about him. "My sufferings," he assures him, "have been intense, but are abating. I begin to know what a little sleep is. My sister has sunk under her anxieties about me. She is laid up, deprived of reason, for many weeks to come, I fear. She is in the same house; but we do not meet. It makes both worse." Notwithstanding, if Hone could come over to Colebrook Row some morning, he could just give him a shake of the hand. He congratulated him on his elaborate paper on Bartholomew Fair, published in the "Every Day Book" under September 5th.

The same sad story is told in two or three notes to Allsop.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[Islington, Sept. 24th, 1825.]

"My dear Allsop,—Come not near this unfortunate roof yet a while. My disease is clearly but slowly going. Field is an excellent attendant. But Mary's anxieties have overturned her. She has her old Miss James with her, without whom I should not feel a support in the world. We keep in separate apartments, & must weather it. Let me know all of your healths. Kindest love to Mrs. Allsop.

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday.

"Can you call at Mrs. Burney, 26 James Street, and tell her, & that I can see no one here in this state. If Martin return, if well enough, I will meet him somewhere; don't let him come."

TO THE SAME.

"Dear Allsop,—Your kindness pursues us every where. That £81.4. 6. is a substantial proof, I think; I never should have ask'd for it. Pray keep it, when you get it, till we see each other. I have plenty of current cash; thank you over and over for your offer.

"We came down on Monday with Miss James. The 1st night I lay broad awake like an owl till 8 o'clock, then got a poor doze. Have had something like sleep and a forgetting last night. We go on tolerably in this deserted house. It is melancholy; but I could not have gone into a quite strange one.

"Newspapers come to you here. Pray stop them. Shall I send what have come?

"Give mine and Mary's kindest love to Mrs. Allsop, with every good wish to Elizabeth and Rob. This house is not what it was. May we all meet cheerful some day soon!

"Yours gratefully and sincerely,

"C. Lamb.

"How long a letter have I written with my own hand!

"Jane says she sent a cradle yesterday morning; she does for us very well.

"Wednesday, Sept. 25."

TO THE SAME.

"Oct. 5, 1825.

"Dear A.,—Have received your drafts. We will talk that over Sunday morning. I am strongish, but have not good nights, and cannot settle my inside.

"Farewell till Sunday.

"I have no possible use for the 1st draft, so shall keep them as above. "Yours truly,

"C. L.

"Wednesday.

"I only trouble you now because, if the drafts had miscarried, any one might have cash'd 'em. Remember at home.

"Ludlow is charming."

TO THE SAME.

"My dear Allsop,—Thanks for the Birds. Your announcement puzzles me sadly, as nothing came. I send you back a word in your letter which I can positively make nothing [of], and therefore return to you as useless. It means to refer to the birds, but gives me no information. They are [on] the fire, however.

"My Sister's illness is the most obstinate she ever had. It will not go away, and I am afraid Miss James will not be able to stay above a day or two longer. I am desperate to think of it sometimes.

"'Tis eleven weeks!

"The day is sad as my prospects.

"With kindest love to Mrs. A, and the Children.

"Yours, "C. L.

"No 'Atlas' this week. Poor Hone's good boy Alfred has fractured his skull; another son is returned 'dead' from the Navy office; & his Book is going to be given up, not having answered. What a world of troubles his is!"

TO THE SAME.

"Dear Allsop,—My injunctions about not calling here had solely reference to your being unwell, &c. at home. I am most glad to see you on my own account. I dine at 3 on either Sunday; come then, or earlier or later; only before dinner I generally walk. You dining here will be quite convenient. I of course have a Joint that day. I owe you for Newspapers, Cobbetts, pheasants, what not?

"Your Most Obliged,

"C. L.

"P. S. I am so well (except Rheumatism, which forbids my being out on evenings) that I forgot to mention my health in the above. Mary is very poorly yet. Love to Mrs. Allsop."

The latest reference to the "Every Day Book," which was followed by the "Table Book" and the "Year Book,"

occurs in a note of July 25th, 1826, and another dateless, where Lamb recognizes Hone's Quatorzains to him in response to his own Quatorzains to the Editor, and declares that he has been repaid with interest. "Your idea of 'worsted in the dog-days' was capital!" Lamb took occasion to avail himself of Hone's services to convey a MS. farce—the same which has been already introduced to notice[1]—to Terry at the Adelphi, a house where Harley was then performing. He calls it his petit farce, says that he had altered it, but that it could not come out for some weeks. "When it does, we think of leaving here, but to borrow a bed of you for the night." It did not appear on the boards, after all; but we shall hear more of it. The state of domestic comfort had, however, improved; the Lambs were once more in their quarters at Enfield, where they were spending their customary holiday; and Charles told Hone that he wrote principally to remind him of the advent of Dogget's Coat and Badge Day (August 1st). "You will find a good deal about him in Cibber's Apology, octavo, facing the window,[2] and something haply in a thin, blackish quarto among the plays, facing the fireside."—Hone was to go to Colebrook and look for himself. "You have done," he goes on, "with mad dogs; else there is a print of Rowlandson's, or somebody's, of people in pursuit of one in a village, which might have come in; also Goldsmith's verses." He subscribes himself to the undated note, "Yours every day, C. L."

It was late in the year before Miss Lamb's stubborn and chronic malady was conquered. At the commencement of December, 1825, Lamb imparted this acceptable intelligence to his friend.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[December 5th, 1825.]

"Dear A.,—You will be glad to hear we are at home to Visitors; not too many or noisy. Some fine day shortly

[1] [Letter to Southey of Aug. 19th, 1825.]

[2] [In the article in the "Every Day Book," Cibber—Lamb's Cibber, no doubt—is largely quoted.]

Mary will surprise Mrs. Allsop. The weather is not seasonable for formal engagements.

"Yours most ever, "C. LAMB.

"Saturday."

TO THE SAME.

[Late in 1825.]

"Dear Allsop,—Mary will take her chance of an early lunch or dinner with you on Thursday: She can't come on Wednesday. If I can, I will fetch her home. But I am near killed with Christmasing; and, if incompetent, your kindness will excuse me. I can scarce set foot to ground for a cramp that I took me last night.

"Yours, "C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

TO THE SAME.

"Dear Allsop,—I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a draft on Messrs. Wms. for 81. 11. 3. which I haste to cash in the present alarming state of the money market. Hurst and Robinson gone. I have imagined a Chorus of ill-used Authors singing on the Occasion:

"What should we when Booksellers break?

"We should rejoice.

"*Da capo.*

"We regret exceedingly Mrs. Allsop's being unwell. Mary or both will come and see her soon. The frost is cruel, and we have both colds. I take Pills again, which battle with your Wine; and Victory hovers doubtful. By the by, tho' not disinclined to presents, I remember our bargain to take a dozen at sale price, and must demur.

"With once again thanks and best loves to Mrs. A.

"Turn over—Yours, "C. LAMB.

"Colebrooke Cottage, Islington, 7th Jan., 1825."
[Post-marked 1826.]

Leigh Hunt, who was again on English soil, after a lengthened stay in Italy (he arrived with his family late in the autumn of 1825), had been very naturally among

the select few to whom the "Essays of Elia" was presented on publication; but it appears that he had mislaid the book, and Lamb, at his request, sent him a second, with a humorous demand as to the fate of the original gift. *W. Honeycomb* was the name assumed by Hunt in his contributions to the "New Monthly Magazine;" Vincentio is, of course, Vincent Novello, to whom more letters will be shortly forthcoming. The writer's Italian may be left to correct itself.

TO LEIGH HUNT.[1]

[Late in 1825.]

"Illustrezzimo Signor,—I have obeyed your mandate to a tittle. I accompany this with a volume. But what have you done with the first I sent you? Have you swapt it with some lazzaroni for macaroni, or pledged it with a gondolierer for a passage? Peradventuri the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it: his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour. 'Tis but a step to the Vatican. As you judge, my works do not enrich the workman; but I get vat I can for 'em. They keep dragging me on, a poor, worn mill-horse, in the eternal round of the damn'd magazine; but 'tis they are blind, not I. 'Colburn' (where I recognize with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendency.

"I was with the Novellos last week. They have a large cheap house and garden, with a dainty library (magnificent) without books; but what will make you bless yourself, (I am too old for wonder,) something has touched the right organ in Vincentio at last. He attends a Wesleyan chapel on Kingsland Green. He at first tried to laugh it off; he only went for the singing; but the cloven foot—I retract—the lamb's trotters are at length apparent. Mary Sabilla attributes it to a lightness induced by his headaches; but I think I see in it a less accidental influence. Mister Clark is at perfect staggers! the whole fabric of his infidelity is shaken. He has no one to join him in his horse-insults and indecent obstreperousnesses against Christianity; for Holmes (the bonny Holmes) is gone to Salis-

[1] ["Correspondence of Leigh Hunt," 1862, i. 248.]

bury to be organist, and Sabilla and the Clark make but a feeble quorum. The children have all neat little clasped pray-books; and I have laid out seven shillings and eightpence in Watts's Hymns for Christmas presents for them. The eldest girl alone holds out. She has been at Boulogne, skirting upon the vast focus of Atheism, and imported bad principles in patois French. But the strongholds are crumbling. Novello appears as yet to have but a confused notion of the Atonement. It makes him giddy, he says, to think much about it; but such giddiness is spiritual sobriety. Well, Byron is gone;[1] and —— is now the best poet in England. Fill up the gap to your fancy. Barry Cornwall has at last carried the pretty A[nne] S[kipper.] They are just in the treacle-moon.[2] Hope it won't clog his wings (*gaum* we used to say at school).

"Mary my sister has worn me out with eight weeks' cold and toothache, her average complement in the Winter; and it will not go away. She is otherwise well, and reads novels all day long. She has had an exempt year, a good year; for which, forgetting the minor calamity, she and I are most thankful.

"Alsager is in a flourishing house, with wife and children about him, in Mecklenburg Square,—almost too fine to visit.

"Barron Field is come home from Sydney; but as yet I can hear no tidings of a pension. He is plump and friendly; his wife, really a very superior woman. He resumes the bar.

"I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is an humble disciple at the foot of Gamaliel S. T. C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare, when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of faith, Christianity, and Christian Church from him than from all the men he ever conversed with! He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montagu told him the dedication would do him no good. 'That shall be a

[1] [Compare the letter to Barton of May 15th, 1824.]

[2] [This reminds one of the "Treacle Bible," 1549, which reads, "There is treacle in Gilead."]

reason for doing it,' was his answer. Judge now, whether this man be a quack.

"Dear H., take this imperfect notelet for a letter: it looks so much the more like conversing on nearer terms. Love to all the Hunts, old friend Thornton, and all.

"Yours ever, "C. LAMB."

The Christmas of 1825 had been a melancholy season for Lamb. He had always from a boy spent that season in the Temple with Mr. Norris, an officer of the Inner Temple, and this year's was made wretched by the last illness of his oldest friend. Anxious to excite the sympathy of the Benchers of the Inn for the survivors, Lamb addressed the following letter to a friend as zealous as himself in all generous offices, in order that he might show it to some of the Benchers. I believe that the son succeeded to his father's post, doubtless through the exertions of Lamb.

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON.

"Colebrooke Row, Islington,
"Saturday, 20th Jan., 1826.

"Dear Robinson,—I called upon you this morning, and found that you had gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not, or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he

called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—'in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;'[1] and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended; but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes[2] and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

> 'We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
> In spite of the devil and Brussels Gazette!'

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the 'Brussels Gazette' now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. 'How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?' His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an inaccessible hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect; and poor deaf Richard—and the more helpless for being so—is thrown on the wide world.

"My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling on

[1] [It is curious that an eminent book-collector of the present day, Mr. C—— M——, made the same remark to the writer of this note.]

[2] [An allusion to the menace of an invasion by Napoleon in the beginning of the century.]

you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers, to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife. "Yours ever,

"CHARLES LAMB."

When the first enjoyment of freedom was over, it may be doubted whether Lamb was happier for the change. He lost a grievance on which he could lavish all the fantastical exaggeration of a sufferer without wounding the feelings of any individual, and perhaps the loss was scarcely compensated by the listless leisure which it brought him. Whenever the facile kindness of his disposition permitted, he fled from those temptations of society, which he could only avoid by flight; and his evening hours of solitude were hardly so sweet as when they were the reliefs and resting-places of his mind,—"glimpses which might make him less forlorn" of the world of poetry and romance. His mornings were chiefly occupied in long walks, sometimes extending to ten or twelve miles, in which at this time he was accompanied by a noble dog, the property of Mr. Hood, to whose humours Lamb became almost a slave.[1] At length the desire of assisting Mr. Hone, in his struggle

[1] The following allusion to Lamb's subservience to Dash is extracted from one of a series of papers, written in a most cordial spirit, and with great characteristic power, by Patmore in the "Court Magazine." "During these interminable rambles—heretofore pleasant in virtue of their profound loneliness and freedom from restraint, Lamb made himself a perfect slave to the dog—whose habits were of the most extravagantly errant nature, for, generally speaking, the creature was half a mile off from his companion either before or behind, scouring the fields or roads in all directions, scampering up or down 'all manner of streets,' and leaving Lamb in a perfect fever of irritation and annoyance; for he was afraid of losing the dog when it was out of sight, and yet could not persuade himself to keep it *in* sight for a moment, by curbing its roving spirit. Dash knew Lamb's weakness in these particulars as well as he did himself, and took a dog-like advantage of it. In the Regent's Park, in particular, Dash had his master completely at his mercy; for the moment they got into the ring, he used to get through the paling on to the green-sward, and disappear for a quarter or half an hour together, knowing perfectly well that Lamb did not dare move from the spot where he (Dash) had disappeared, till such time as he thought proper to show him-

to support his family by antiquarian research and modern pleasantry, renewed to him the blessings of regular labour; he began the task of reading through the glorious heap of dramas collected at the British Museum under the title of the "Garrick Plays," to glean scenes of interest and beauty for the work of his friend; and the work of kindness brought with it its own reward.

[The next note is curious on two accounts: in the first place, it is a mere *business* communication, and exhibits Lamb in a light in which we are not accustomed to regard him; secondly, the subject has a strange bearing on the writer's personal or family history. His own experience in this direction had been long and melancholy enough. That a stranger should address him—*through Godwin*, too!—upon such a topic, seems so odd. If Mr. Hudson (whoever he may have been) had not the good taste to seek the required information elsewhere, Godwin, who must surely have been acquainted with the painful facts, would have instinctively shunned, one would imagine, the office of middleman on the occasion; but we are somewhat prepared by the introductory notice of him for such a want of sensibility.]

TO MR. HUDSON.

"Colebrooke Row, Islington,
"1st Feb., 1826.

"Sir,—I was requested by Mr. Godwin to inquire about a nurse that you want for a lady who requires constraint. The one I know does not go out now; but at Whitmore House, Mr. Warburton's, Hoxton (to which she belongs), I dare say you may be very properly provided. The terms are eight & twenty shillings a week, with her board, she finding her beer and washing: which is less expensive than for a female patient to be taken into a house of that description with any tolerable accommodation.

"I am, Sir,
"Your humble Servant,
"C. LAMB."

[Endorsed:]
"Mr. Hudson, Legacy Office, Somerset House."

self again. And they used to take this particular walk much oftener than they otherwise would, precisely because Dash liked it and Lamb did not."—Under his second master, we learn from the same source, that Dash "subsided into the best bred and best behaved of his species."

In the spring of 1826, the following letters to Bernard Barton and Coleridge were written.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B.,—I don't know why I have delay'd so long writing. 'Twas a fault. The under current of excuse to my mind was that I had heard of the vessel in which Mitford's jars were to come; that it had been obliged to put into Batavia to refit (which accounts for its delay), but was daily expected. Days are past, and it comes not, and the mermaids may be drinking their tea out of his china for aught I know; but let's hope not. In the meantime I have paid £28, &c. for the freight and prime cost. But do not mention it. I was enabled to do it by a receipt of £30 from Colburn, with whom, however, I have done. I should else have run short. For I just make ends meet. We will wait the arrival of the trinkets, and to ascertain their full expense, and then bring in the bill. Don't mention it; for I dare say 'twas mere thoughtlessness. I am sorry that you and yours have any plagues about these matters. I have been sadly puzzled at the defalcation of more than one third of my income, out of which, when entire, I saved nothing. But dropping of wine, old books, &c. &c.—in short, all that can be called pocket-money—I hope to be able to go on at the cottage. Remember, I beg of you not to say any thing to M.; for if he be honest, 'twill vex him: if not —which I as little expect as that you should be—I have a Bank still upon the Jars.

"Colburn had something of mine in last month, which he has had in hand these seven months, and had lost, or couldn't find room for: I was used to different treatment in the 'London,' and have forsworn periodicals. I am going thro' a course of reading at the Museum—the Garrick plays, out of part of which I have formed my specimens. I have two thousand to go thro', and in a few weeks have despatched a tythe of 'em. It is a sort of office to me; hours, ten to four, the same. It does me good. Man must have regular occupation, that has been used to it.

"Will you pardon my neglect? Mind, again I say, don't show this to M.; let me wait a little longer to know the event of his luxuries. I am sure he is a good fellow, tho' I made a serious Yorkshire lad stare, when I said he was a Clergyman. He is a pleasant Layman spoil'd. Heaven send him his jars un-crack'd, and me my——

"Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend, in which Mary joins, "C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Feb. 7th, 1826.

"Dear B. B.,—I got your book not more than five days ago, so am not so negligent as I must have appeared to you with a fortnight's sin upon my shoulders. I tell you with sincerity, that I think you have completely succeeded in what you intended to do. What is poetry may be disputed. These are poetry to me at least. They are concise, pithy, and moving. Uniform as they are, and untristorify'd, I read them through at two sittings, without one sensation approaching to tedium. I do not know that among your many kind presents of this nature this is not my favourite volume. The language is never lax, and there is a unity of design and feeling. You wrote them *with love*—to avoid the cox*combical* phrase *con amore*. I am particularly pleased with the 'Spiritual Law,' pages 34 and 35. It reminded me of Quarles, and 'holy Mr. Herbert,' as Izaak Walton calls him; the two best, if not only, of our devotional poets, though some prefer Watts, and some *Tom Moore*. I am far from well, or in my right spirits, and shudder at pen-and-ink work. I poke out a monthly crudity for Colburn in his magazine, which I call 'Popular Fallacies,' and periodically crush a proverb or two, setting up my folly against the wisdom of nations. Do you see the 'New Monthly?'

"One word I must object to in your little book, and it recurs more than once—*fadeless* is no genuine compound; loveless is, because love is a noun as well as verb; but what is a fade? And I do not quite like whipping the Greek drama upon the back of 'Genesis,' page 8. I do not like praise handed in by disparagement; as I objected

to a side censure on Byron, &c. in the 'Lines on Bloomfield.' With these poor cavils excepted, your verses are without a flaw. "C. LAMB."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 20th, 1826.

"Dear B. B.,—You may know my letters by the paper and the folding. For the former, I live on scraps obtained in charity from an old friend, whose stationery is a permanent perquisite; for folding, I shall do it neatly when I learn to tie my neckcloths. I surprise most of my friends, by writing to them on ruled paper, as if I had not got past pothooks and hangers. Sealing-wax I have none on my establishment; wafers of the coarsest bran supply its place. When my epistles come to be weighed with Pliny's, however superior to the Roman in delicate irony, judicious reflections, &c., his gilt post will bribe over the judges to him. All the time I was at the E. I. H., I never mended a pen; I now cut 'em to the stumps, marring rather than mending the primitive goose-quill. I cannot bear to pay for articles I used to get for nothing. When Adam laid out his first penny upon nonpareils at some stall in Mesopotamos, I think it went hard with him, reflecting upon his old goodly orchard, where he had so many for nothing. When I write to a great man at the court end, he opens with surprise upon a naked note, such as Whitechapel people interchange, with no sweet degrees of envelope. I never enclosed one bit of paper in another, nor understood the rationale of it. Once only I sealed with borrowed wax, to set Walter Scott a-wondering, signed with the imperial quartered arms of England, which my friend Field bears in compliment to his descent, in the female line, from Oliver Cromwell. It must have set his antiquarian curiosity upon watering. To your questions upon the currency I refer you to Mr. Robinson's last speech, where, if you can find a solution, I cannot. I think this, though—the best ministry we ever stumbled upon;—gin reduced four shillings in the gallon, wine two shillings in the quart! This comes home to men's minds and bosoms. My tirade against visitors was not meant *particularly* at you or Anne Knight. I

scarce know what I meant, for I do not just now feel the grievance. I wanted to make an *article*. So in another thing I talked of somebody's *insipid wife* without a correspondent object in my head: and a good lady, a friend's wife, whom I really *love* (don't startle, I mean in a licit way), has looked shyly on me ever since. The blunders of personal application are ludicrous. I send out a character every now and then on purpose to exercise the ingenuity of my friends. 'Popular Fallacies' will go on; that word *concluded* is an erratum, I suppose for *continued*. I do not know how it got stuffed in there. A little thing without name will also be printed on the Religion of the Actors; but it is out of your way, so I recommend you, with true author's hypocrisy, to skip it. We are about to sit down to roast beef, at which we could wish A. K., B. B., and B. B.'s pleasant daughter to be humble partakers. So much for my hint at visitors, which was scarcely calculated for droppers-in from Woodbridge; the sky does not drop such larks every day.[1] My very kindest wishes to you all three, with my sister's best love. "C. LAMB."

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"March 22nd, 1826.

"Dear C.,—We will with great pleasure be with you on Thursday in the next week early. Your finding out my style in your nephew's pleasant book is surprising to me. I want eyes to descry it. You are a little too hard upon his morality, though I confess he has more of Sterne about him than of Sternhold. But he saddens into excellent sense before the conclusion. Your query shall be submitted to Miss Kelly, though it is obvious that the pantomime, when done, will be more easy to decide upon than in proposal. I say, do it by all means. I have Decker's play by me, if you can filch anything out of it. Miss Gray, with her kitten eyes, is an actress, though she shows it not at all, and pupil to the former, whose gestures she mimics in comedy to the disparagement of her own natural manner, which is agreeable. It is funny to see her bridling up her

[1] [A reference to the proverb.]

neck, which is native to F. K.;[1] but there is no setting another's manners upon one's shoulders any more than their head. I am glad you esteem Manning, though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not, save to select worshippers, and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is. I am perfecting myself in the 'Ode to Eton College'[2] against Thursday, that I may not appear unclassic. I have just discovered that it is much better than the 'Elegy.'

"In haste, "C. L.

"P.S.—I do not know what to say to your *latest* theory about Nero being the Messiah, though by all accounts he was a 'nointed one:"

The "smiling hypocrites of Mays" form the central picture of a little note of this time to Novello, and he speaks of the cold season in a longer letter to Barton, where he alludes to Hood's growing fame, to Coleridge, and to other matters.

TO VINCENT NOVELLO.[3]

[Tuesday, May 9th, 1826.]

"Dear N.,—You will not expect us to-morrow, I am sure, while these damn'd North-Easters continue. We must wait the Zephyrs' pleasure. By-the-bye, I was at Highgate on Wednesday, the only one of the party.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"*Summer*, as my friend Coleridge waggishly writes, has set in with its usual severity.[4]

"Kind remem[ces] to Mrs. Novello, &c.

"V. Novello, Esq., Green, Shacklewell."

[1] [Fanny Kelly.] [2] [By Gray the poet.]

[3] [From the original in the British Museum.]

[4] [I am afraid that Coleridge had been forestalled by Byron, and he again by Walpole—Walpole, perchance, by some ancient.]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"May 16th, 1826.

"Dear B. B.,—I have had no spirits lately to begin a letter to you, though I am under obligations to you (how many!) for your neat little poem. 'Tis just what it professes to be, a simple tribute, in chaste verse, serious and sincere.

"I do not know how friends will relish it, but we outlyers, honorary friends, like it very well. I have had my head and ears stuffed up with the east winds. A continual ringing in my brain of bells jangled, or the spheres touched by some raw angel. It is not George the Third trying the Hundredth Psalm? I get my music for nothing. But the weather seems to be softening, and will thaw my stunnings. Coleridge, writing to me a week or two since, begins his note—'Summer has set in with its usual severity.' A cold summer is all I know of disagreeable in cold. I do not mind the utmost rigour of real winter, but these smiling hypocrites of Mays wither me to death. My head has been a ringing chaos, like the day the winds were made, before they submitted to the discipline of a weathercock—before the quarters were made. In the street, with the blended noises of life about me, I hear, and my head is lightened; but in a room the hubbub comes back, and I am deaf as a sinner. Did I tell you of a pleasant sketch Hood has done, which he calls—'*Very deaf indeed?*' It is of a good-natured stupid-looking old gentleman, whom a footpad has stopped, but for his extreme deafness cannot make him understand what he wants. The unconscious old gentleman is extending his ear trumpet very complacently, and the fellow is firing a pistol into it to make him hear, but the ball will pierce his skull sooner than the report reach his sensorium. I choose a very little bit of paper, for my ear hisses when I bend down to write. I can hardly read a book, for I miss that small soft voice which the idea of articulated words raises (almost imperceptibly to you) in a silent reader. I seem too deaf to see what I read. But with a touch or two of returning zephyr my head will melt. What lies you poets tell about the May! It is the most ungenial part of the year. Cold crocuses, cold primroses, you take your blossoms in ice—a painted sun.

'Unmeaning joy around appears,
And nature smiles as if she sneers.'

"It is ill with me when I begin to look which way the wind sits. Ten years ago, I literally did not know the point from the broad end of the vane, which it was that indicated the quarter. I hope these ill winds have blown *over* you as they do through me.

"So A. K. keeps a school; she teaches nothing wrong, I'll answer for 't. I have a Dutch print of a school-mistress; little old-fashioned Fleminglings, with only one face among them. She a princess of a school-mistress, wielding a rod for form more than use; the scene, an old monastic chapel, with a Madonna over her head, looking just as serious, as thoughtful, as pure, as gentle as herself. 'Tis a type of thy friend.

"Yours with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend,[1] in which Mary joins, "C. LAMB."

[1] [Lucy Barton and Anne Knight.]

CHAPTER X.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH HAZLITT, COLERIDGE, BARTON, MOXON, HONE, ALLSOP, HAYDON, AND NOVELLO.

[1826-7.]

THE letters which we now give belong to the summer and latter half of 1826, and the earlier half of the following year. In the first there is an agreeable little reminiscence of the old evenings at Mitre Court Buildings.

TO WILLIAM HAZLITT.[1]

[1826.]

"Dear H.,—Lest you sh[d] come to-morrow, I write to say that Mary is ill again. The last thing she read was the 'Thursday Nights,' which seem'd to give her unmix'd delight, & she was sorry for what she said to you that night. The Article[2] is a treasure to us for ever. Stoddart sent over the magaz[e] to know if it were yours, and says it is better than Hogarth's 'Mod. Midn. Conversation,' with several other most kind mentions of it: he signs his note *An old Mitre Courtian.*

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday."

[Endorsed:]

"W. Hazlitt, Esq.,"

[In a second hand:]

"10, Southampton Buildings."

About this time a little sketch was taken of Lamb by his friend, Mr. Brook Pulham, of the India House, and

[1] [Now first printed.]

[2] ["On Persons one would wish to have Seen," in the "New Monthly Magazine" for 1826. I have already mentioned that the Lambs, on their removal, in 1817, from the Temple to Russell Street, Covent Garden, changed their reception night from Wednesday to Thursday.]

published. It is certainly not flattering; but there is a touch of Lamb's character in it. He sent one of the prints to Coleridge with the following note, which seems to have been written while he was still unaware of the name of the artist.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"June 1st, 1826.

"Dear Coleridge,—If I know myself, nobody more detests the display of personal vanity which is implied in the act of sitting for one's picture than myself. But the fact is, that the likeness which accompanies this letter was stolen from my person at one of my unguarded moments by some too partial artist, and my friends are pleased to think that he has not much flattered me. Whatever its merits may be, you, who have so great an interest in the original, will have a satisfaction in tracing the features of one that has so long esteemed you. There are times when in a friend's absence these graphic representations of him almost seem to bring back the man himself. The painter, whoever he was, seems to have taken me in one of those disengaged moments, if I may so term them, when the native character is so much more honestly displayed than can be possible in the restraints of an enforced sitting attitude. Perhaps it rather describes me as a thinking man than a man in the act of thought. Whatever its pretensions, I know it will be dear to you, towards whom I should wish my thoughts to flow in a sort of an undress rather than in the more studied graces of diction.

"I am, dear Coleridge, yours sincerely, "C. Lamb."

A letter to Mr. Coleridge, one of the masters of Eton, and afterwards Vicar of Mapledurham, near Reading (a living in the gift of the College), thanking him for a service which he had performed, is the only one addressed to a member of the family otherwise than Coleridge himself. Mr. J. B. Bloxam, writing to a former possessor of the original, says: "Your letter of Charles Lamb is very interesting to me. Samuel Anthony Bloxam was my uncle. He was residing at Windsor in 1827-8, where I paid him a

visit at the house of the masters. His son Frederick was then on the foundation at Eton, probably through Mr. Coleridge, at Lamb's request.

"Both he and Lamb were educated at Christ's Hospital, and very probably contemporaries. His daughter is a Sister of Mercy, or whatever they call it, at St. Thomas's, Oxford."

TO THE REV. EDWARD COLERIDGE.

"Dear Sir,—It was not till to-day that I learned the extent of your kindness to my friend's child. I never meant to ask a favour of that magnitude. I begged a civility merely, not *an important benefit*. But you have done it, and S. T. C., who is about writing to you, will tell you better than I can how I feel upon the occasion. It is an alleviation to any uneasy sense of obligation, which will sometimes be uppermost, to reflect that you could not have served a more worthy creature than I believe Samuel Bloxam to be. That must be my poor comfort.

"I remain,
"Your faithful beadsman,
"In less honest phrase, tho' less homely.
"Your obliged humble Servt.,
"CH. LAMB.

"Colebrooke Cottage, 19th July, 1826."

[Endorsed:]

"The Rev. Edward Coleridge, Eton College, Berks."

Barton must have looked forward with immense zest to the letters, which his un-Quakerish friend showered so unstintingly upon him during all these years. The post was invested with a new charm. The next which we have is unusually rich in literary gossip, and introduces Mr. Mitford busily engaged in those studies which he loved, and with which his memory is honourably connected, although he was not only, as Lamb gently hints, a careless corrector of the press, but a negligent editor.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1826.

"Dear B. B.,—The *Busy Bee*, as Hood, after Dr. Watts, apostrophises thee, and well dost thou deserve it for thy labours in the Muses' gardens, wandering over parterres of Think-on-mes and Forget-me-nots, to a total impossibility of forgetting thee,—thy letter was acceptable, thy scruples may be dismissed, thou art *rectus in curiâ*: not a word more to be said—*verbum sapienti*, and so forth: the matter is decided with a white stone classically, mark me, and the apparitions vanish'd which haunted me, only the cramp, Caliban's distemper, clawing me in the calvish part of my nature, makes me ever and anon roar bullishly, squeak cowardishly, and limp cripple-ishly. Do I write quakerly and simply, 'tis my most Master Mathews-like intention to do it. See Ben Johnson.—I think you told me your acquaintance with the Drama was confin'd to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie: some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip. I have fighting in my head the plots, characters, situations, and sentiments of 400 old plays (bran-new to me) which I have been digesting at the Museum; and my appetite sharpens to twice as many more, which I mean to course over this winter. I can scarce avoid dialogue fashion in this letter. I soliloquise my meditations, and habitually speak dramatic blank verse without meaning it. Do you see Mitford? He will tell you something of my labours. Tell him I am sorry to have missed seeing him, to have talked over those old Treasures. I am still more sorry for his missing Pots. But I shall be sure of the earliest intelligence of the Lost Tribes. His Sacred Specimens are a thankful addition to my shelves. Marry, I could wish he had been more careful of corrigenda. I have discover'd certain which have slipt his errata. I put 'em in the next page, as perhaps thou canst transmit them to him. For what purpose, but to grieve him (which yet I should be sorry to do); but then it shows my learning, and the excuse is complimentary, as it implies their correction in a future edition. His own things in the book are magnificent, and as an old Christ's Hospitaller I was particularly refresh'd with his eulogy on our Edward.[1] Many of the choice ex-

[1] [Edward VI., founder of the Blue Coat School.]

cerpta were new to me. Old Christmas is a coming, to the confusion of Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that unwassailing crew. He cometh not with his wonted gait; he is shrunk nine inches in his girth, but is yet a lusty fellow. Hood's book is mighty clever, and went off 600 copies the first day. Sion's Songs do not disperse so quickly. The next leaf is for Rev. J. M. In this adieu; thine briefly, in a tall friendship,

"C. LAMB."

A note to Mr. Edward Moxon, then on the staff at Messrs. Hurst and Chance's, seems to be the earliest of the series which he was to receive, and his name occurs for the first time. The Lambs were at present in lodgings at Enfield.

TO EDWARD MOXON.[1]

"Mr. Westwood's, Enfield, 1826-7.

"Dear Moxon,—Much thanks for the Books! Hood is excellent! Mr. Westwood, who wishes to consult you about his son, will acquaint you with our change of life. Mary's very bad spirits drove me upon it, and it seems to answer admirably. We shall be happy to see you at our table d'hôte, say the *Sunday after next* . . . . but am at present poorlyish.

"Yours very truly, "C. L."

"Edward Moxon, Esq.,
"Messrs. Hurst and Co.,
"65, St. Paul's Churchyard."

Lamb now at length found himself in a position to let Hone commence the extracts from the Garrick Plays, about which he had been busy for some little time past in the original reading-room of the museum at Montagu House. His friendship with Cary probably facilitated his access to the national library.

[1] [Mr. A. Ireland, of Bowdon, *orig.* A few words have been partly scored out. Compare the letter to Colburn of 1827.]

TO WILLIAM HONE.

"Jan. 27, 1827.

"Dear Sir,—It is not unknown to you, that about sixteen years since I published "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakespear." For the scarcer plays, I had recourse to the collection bequeathed to the British Museum by Mr. [Mrs.] Garrick. But my time was but short; and my subsequent leisure has discovered in it a treasure rich and exhaustless beyond what I then imagined. In it is to be found almost every production, in the shape of a play, that has appeared in print since the time of the old mysteries and moralities to the days of Crown and D'Urfey. Imagine the luxury to one like me,—who, above every other form of poetry, have ever preferred the dramatic,—of sitting in the princely apartments, for such they are, of poor, condemned Montagu House,—which, I predict, will not soon be followed by a handsomer,—and culling at will the flowers of some thousand dramas! It is like having the range of a nobleman's library, with the librarian to your friend. Nothing can exceed the courteousness and attentions of the gentleman who has the chief direction of the reading-rooms here; and you have scarce to ask for a volume before it is laid before you. If the occasional extracts which I have been tempted to bring away may find an appropriate place in your "Table Book," some of them are weekly at your service. By those who remember the "Specimens," these must be considered as mere after-gleanings, supplementary to that work, only comprising a longer period. You must be content with sometimes a scene, sometimes a song, a speech, a passage, or a poetical image, as they happen to strike me. I read without order of time; I am a poor hand at dates; and, for any biography of the dramatists, I must refer to writers who are more skilful in such matters. My business is with their poetry only.

"Your well-wisher,

"C. Lamb."

Curiously enough, no allusion whatever occurs otherwise to a serious embarrassment, in which the next, of the 2nd

February, 1827, finds Allsop. The precise nature of the crisis is nowhere stated; but we hear of Lamb visiting Coleridge at Highgate in connection with it. Allsop was on the Exchange; possibly it was a *House* affair. To add to the trouble, Miss Lamb had one of her illnesses. Lamb says to Allsop:—"I went to Highgate this day. I gave to S. T. C. your letter, which he immediately answered, and to which Mrs. Gilman insisted upon adding her own." It appears as if Coleridge was trying to help Allsop, and had hope of success. Lamb continues:—"Pray get over your reluctance to paying him a visit: see, and talk with him. . . . . Older men than you have surmounted worse difficulties. . . . ." Lamb expresses the great effort it had cost him to go to Highgate and back, and kindly suggested to his correspondent that, if he did not like to pay Coleridge a visit, an appointment might be made at his house or at Allsop's. In a second note, written from Enfield, a few days later, Lamb asks Allsop not to come to him at present, as Miss Lamb's state did not admit it.

A few days before this, apparently in reply to a letter from Allsop, in which he had reported the issue of his mediation with Taylor the publisher on some point, which is not specified, Lamb wrote complainingly as to his own state of health, but as regarded Allsop with undiminished cordiality, and without any reference to the subject-matter of the letter above-mentioned.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

"January 25, 1827.

"My dear Allsop,—I cannot forbear thanking you for your kind interference with Taylor, whom I do not expect to see in haste at Islington.

"It is hardly weather to ask a dog up here, but I need hardly say how happy we shall be to see you. I cannot be out of evenings till John Frost be routed. We came home from Newman St. the other night late, and I was crampt all night.

"Loves to Mrs. Allsop.

"Yours truly, "C. L."

The Extracts duly made their appearance in instalments in the successor to the "Every-day Book." Errors of the press ensued as a matter of course.

TO WILLIAM HONE.

[March 20th, 1827.]

"Damnable erratum (can't you notice it?) in the last line but two of the last Extract in No. 9 'Garrick Plays':—

'Blushing forth golden hair and glorious red—'

A sun-bright line spoiled: *Blush* for *Blushing*.

"N.B.—The general number was excellent. Last line but one of the *Extract* preceding the former (the end of the old man's speech),

'Restrain'd liberty attain'd is sweet—'

should have a full stop. These little blemishes kill such delicate things; prose feeds on grosser punctualities. You have now 3 numbers in hand: one I sent you yesterday. Of course I send no more till Sunday week.

"C. L.

"P.S. Omitted above, Dear Hone.

"Mr. Hone, No. 22, Belvidere Place, Southwark."

There are a few more notes to Hone, which merely deal with these and other cognate minutiæ, while he continued to lend his helping hand to the Editor in his series of popular works. In that of August 10th, 1825, when the "Every-day Book" was in course of issue, he remarks, "I have returned the Shakespear *errata*, finding much nonsense, good principles of correction, but sad wildness in the application of them." In another of the year, he says to him, "The first bit of writing I have done these many weeks. The quotations from both the Colliers[1] are correct, I assure you. C. Lamb, getting well, but weak." In relation to the extracts in the "Table Book" he inquires, "who

[1] [Jeremy Collier, the writer against the stage and literary antagonist of Congreve, and the late John Payne Collier, an author on the other side of the question.]

is your compositor? I cannot praise enough the beauty and accuracy of the 'Garrick Play' Types. That of Zelidaura, &c., 2 or 3 numbers back, was really a poser. He must be no ordinary person who got through it (so quaint) without a slip. Not one in a 1,000 would have done it. . . . I send you a trifle. You have seen my lines, I suppose, in the 'London.' I cannot tell you how much I like 'St. Chad's Well.'"

In regard to the Clog Almanac, which forms the frontispiece to the second volume of the "Every-day Book," with a long explanation in the Preface, Lamb writes:—"Your Almanack is funny; it only disappointed me as being not an almanack. What a one you might make, embracing a real calendar, with astrological ridicule, predictions like Tom Brown's 'for every day in the week.' The only information I receive from this is that New Year's Day happened this year on the 1st of January. I do not see the days even set down on which I ought to go to church, the Dominical Letter—fie!"

In "Blackwood's Magazine" for April, 1827, occurs a paper entitled 'Le Revenant,' purporting to be the true story of a man who had been hanged and afterwards resuscitated. There have been many such cases; but Lamb was naturally struck by the narrative, which tallied so closely with his own paper in the "Reflector," "On the Inconveniences resulting from being hanged," and the farce constructed by him out of it, of both of which we have heard in a former letter to Southey. Writing to Hone (April, 1827), he says, "There is in 'Blackwood' this month an article most affecting indeed, called 'Le Revenant,' and would do more towards abolishing capital punishment than 40,000 Romillys or Montagus. I beg you to read it, and see if you can extract any of it—the trial scene in particular." But it appears highly probable that the writer in "Blackwood" had seen the earlier publication; and the insertion in its columns of 'Le Revenant' may have suggested to Lamb the successful proposal to commit to the press through the same medium his rejected farce on the same whimsical theme.

Lamb was now fairly in a literary line with Hone as an occasional contributor to the "Table Book," and many com-

munications, chiefly little notes, were to pass between them. The two which follow were, as it were, official; but he was constantly making written or verbal inquiries, and tendering advice. There is a line of Feb. 5th, 1827. "For God's sake, be more sparing of your poetry; your this week's Number has an excess of it." And later on he greeted the "Table Book's" arrival at Enfield, and begged Hone not to spare the Extracts from the "Garrick Plays," which would eke out till Christmas. He mentioned this, because in a note of Aug. 10th he had expressed an opinion that his copy was drawing to a conclusion.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TABLE BOOK."

[May, 1827.]

"Sir,—A correspondent in your last number[1] rather hastily asserts that there is no other authority than Davenport's Tragedy[2] for the poisoning of Matilda by King John. It oddly enough happens, that in the same number appears an extract from a play of Heywood's,[3] of an older date, in two parts, in which play the fact of such poisoning, as well as her identity with Maid Marian, are equally established. Michael Drayton, also, hath a legend confirmatory (so far as poetical authority can go) of the violent manner of her death.[4] But neither he nor Davenport confounds her with Robin's mistress.[5] Besides the named

[1] [A letter dated May 17th, 1827, and signed "The Veiled Spirit." The writer appears to have had a rather confused and imperfect notion of the subject.]

[2] ["King John and Matilda: a Tragedy, as it was acted, with great applause, by her Majesties Servants, at the Cockpit, in Drury Lane. Written by Robert Davenport, Gent. 1655." The drama, as the title implies, had been acted before 1648. Pennycuicke—who was an actor, and for whose benefit it was published in 1655—performed the part of Matilda in it.]

[3] [Not by Heywood, but by A. Munday and H. Chettle. The play referred to is the "Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington," and the sequel to it, the "Death of Robert, Earle of Huntington," both printed in 1601.]

[4] ["The Legend of Matilda." First printed in 1594.]

[5] [This, indeed, seems to have been a comparatively late invention. It is in none of the early poems.]

authorities, old Fuller, I think, somewhere[1] relates, as matter of chronicle-history, that old Fitzwater (he is called Fitzwater both in Heywood and in Davenport), being banished after his daughter's murder,—some years subsequently, King John, at a tournament in France, being delighted with the valiant bearing of a combatant in the lists, and enquiring his name, was told it was his old servant, the banished Fitzwater, who desired nothing more heartily than to be reconciled to his liege; and an affecting reconciliation followed. In the common collection, called 'Robin Hood's Garland' (I have not seen Ritson's), no mention is made, if I remember, of the nobility of Marian.[2] Is she not the daughter of old Squire Gamwell, of Gamwell Hall? Sorry that I cannot gratify the curiosity of your 'disembodied spirit' (who, as such is, methinks, sufficiently 'veiled' from our notice) with more authentic testimonies, I rest, "Your humble Abstractor,

"C. L."

Since the movement on behalf of Godwin, in which Lamb took so active a part (1822), we have not heard anything of Haydon the painter. But Lamb and he doubtless saw more or less of each other. Here is proof for us that the former had called to see the new picture of "Alexander":—

TO B. R. HAYDON.

[Ash Wednesday, 1827.]

"Dear Raffaele Haydon,—Did the maid tell you I came

[1] [In his "Worthies of England." But Fuller is no authority upon such a point as this. See the late Mr. Hunter's tract, 1850.]

[2] [There is no edition of the "Garland" extant, that I know, prior to 1670; nor are the poems of which it is composed of any peculiar antiquity *in their present form*. I take the "Lytel Geste," printed by W. de Worde after 1502 (not about 1490, as has been alleged), to be merely a popular epitome of the legends then current. The late Mr. Coote has an admirable paper on the Robin Hood Epos in the "Folk Lore Journal" for January-March, 1885, with which, however, I do not wholly agree; and in Mr. Hunter's tract on the Ballad-Hero, the paper by Mr. George Fletcher, in the "Westminster Review," and Mr. Wright, in his "Essays," 1846, a great deal of new suggestive material and information has been brought together since Ritson's day. But in none of the genuine remains is there anything about Marian's noble birth; it seems to have been an idea first broached, for the sake of dramatic effect, by the playwrights.]

to see your picture,[1] not on Sunday but the day before? I think the face and bearing of the Bucephalus-tamer very noble, his flesh too effeminate or painty. The skin of the female's back kneeling is much more carnous. I had small time to pick out praise or blame, for two lord-like bucks[2] came in, upon whose strictures my presence seemed to impose restraint: I plebeian'd off therefore. I think I have hit on a subject for you, but can't swear it was never executed,—I never heard of its being—'Chaucer beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street.' Think of the old dresses, houses, &c. 'It seemeth that both these learned men (Gower and Chaucer) were of the Inner Temple; for not many years since Master Buckley did see a record in the same house where Geoffry Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street.'—*Chaucer's Life by T. Speght*, prefixed to the black-letter folio of Chaucer, 1598.

"Yours in haste (salt fish waiting),

"C. LAMB."

The next is to Novello.

TO HIS ESTEEMED FRIEND AND EXCELLENT MUSICIAN, V. N., ESQ.[3]

[April, 1827.]

"Dear Sir,—I conjure you, in the name of all the Sylvan Deities, and of the Muses, whom you honour—and they reciprocally love and honour you—rescue this old and passionate 'Ditty'[4]—the very flower of an old forgotten Pas-

[1] ["Alexander," sent to the Royal Academy on April 4th.]

[2] Duke of Devonshire and Agar-Ellis.—*Note by Haydon.*

[3] [First printed in Hone's "Table Book," 1827, p. 514.]

[4] [The beautiful song in Peele's "Arraygnment of Paris," 1584, which is introduced into this pastoral as a duet between Paris and Œnone. It begins:

"*Œn.* Fair, and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be,
The fairest Shepherd on our green,
A love for any Lady.

toral which, had it been in all parts equal, the 'Faithful Shepherdess' of Fletcher had been but a second name in this sort of Writing—rescue it from the profane hands of every Common Composer; and in one of your tranquillest moods, when you have most leisure from those sad thoughts which sometimes unworthily beset you—yet a mood in itself not unallied to the better sort of melancholy—laying by for once the lofty Organ, with which you shake the Temples: attune, as to the Pipe of Paris himself, to some milder and love-according instrument, this pretty Courtship between Paris and his (then-not-as-yet-forsaken) Œnone. Oblige me, and all more knowing Judges of Music and of Poesy, by the adaptation of fit musical numbers, which it only wants, to be the rarest Love-Dialogue in our language. "Your Implorer,

"C. L."

Miss Fanny Kelly had originally appeared in the character of *Blindness* in the opera of "Arthur and Emmeline," at Covent Garden, October 26th, 1819; and on the revival of the piece, a few years later, some one sent to the "Table Book" (under a misapprehension, perhaps) a sonnet which Lamb had inserted in the "Morning Chronicle" at the time as the same lady's performance in the "Blind Boy." It is to this mistake that the following letter adverts.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TABLE BOOK."

[June, 1827.]

"Dear Sir,—Somebody has fairly play'd a *hoax* on you (I suspect that pleasant rogue *Moxon*) in sending you the sonnet in my name inserted in your last number.[1] True it

Par. Fair, and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be,
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other Lady."

But the whole may be seen in Mr. Dyce's edition of Peele, royal 8vo, 1861. The ditty fully justifies Lamb's eulogium and admiration.]

[1] The production is entitled, "Sonnet to Miss Kelly, on her excellent Performance of *Blindness* in the revived Opera of 'Arthur and

is that I must own to the verses being mine, but not written on the occasion there pretended; for I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing the lady in the part of Emmeline; and I have understood that the force of her acting in it is rather in the expression of new-born sight, than of the previous want of it. The lines were really written upon her performance in the 'Blind Boy,' and appeared in the 'Morning Chronicle' some years back. I suppose our facetious friend thought they would serve again, like an old coat new-turned. "Yours (and his, nevertheless),

"C. LAMB."

Emmeline.'" See the "Table Book," ii. 55; or the "Poems," where it appears under a slightly altered title.

CHAPTER XI.

LETTERS TO CARY, BARTON, PATMORE, MRS. SHELLEY, STODDART, HOOD, ETC.

[1827.]

IN the following summer, Lamb and his sister went on a long visit to Enfield, which ultimately led to his giving up Colebrooke Cottage, and becoming a constant resident at that place. It was a great sacrifice to him, who loved London so well; but his sister's health and his own required a secession from the crowd of visitors who pressed on him at Islington, and whom he could not help welcoming. He thus invited the Rev. Henry Francis Cary to look in upon his retreat. Cary, well known as the translator of Dante and a portion of Aristophanes, was at this time Assistant Keeper of the Printed Books at the British Museum, only one such functionary, instead of four as now, being then considered necessary, and had apartments allotted to him there. He was the last Assistant Keeper who enjoyed the advantage. He was succeeded by Mr. Garnett, father of the present able officer of that name. Lamb and Cary had been acquainted at least since 1823, as we have seen from former letters.

TO MR. CARY.

"Dear Sir,—It is whispered me that you will not be unwilling to look into our doleful hermitage. Without more preface, you will gladden our cell by accompanying our old chums of the London, Darley[1] and Allan Cunningham, to

[1] [George Darley, a writer in the "London," and editor of some of our early dramatists. He was a greater stutterer even than Lamb himself.]

Enfield on Wednesday. You shall have hermit's fare, with talk as seraphical as the novelty of the divine life will permit, with an innocent retrospect to the world which we have left, when I will thank you for your hospitable offer at Chiswick, and with plain hermit reasons evince the necessity of abiding here.

"Without hearing from you, then, you shall give us leave to expect you. I have long had it on my conscience to invite you, but spirits have been low; and I am indebted to chance for this awkward but most sincere invitation.

"Yours, with best love to Mrs. Cary,

"C. Lamb."

"Darley knows all about the coaches. Oh, for a Museum in the wilderness!"

[The letters to Barton were still in progress, and, as it will be perceived, were full of excellent criticism and fine feeling. In a former letter he had given Barton his opinion of Blake the artist, and now he told him what he thought of John Martin. Martin lived latterly in Lindsey Row, Chelsea, where I knew him. He was a whist player, and a remarkably handsome man. One of his daughters married Joseph Bonomi. Besides his painting, Martin interested himself in public matters. I have a paper in his handwriting on the drainage question, which he gave to my father.]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"June 11th, 1827.

"Dear B. B.,—Martin's 'Belshazzar' (the picture) I have seen. Its architectural effect is stupendous, but the human figures, the squalling contorted little antics that are playing at being frightened, like children at a sham ghost, who half know it to be a mask, are detestable. Then the *letters* are nothing more than a transparency lighted up, such as a Lord might order to be lit up on a sudden at a Christmas gambol, to scare the ladies. The *type* is as plain as Baskerville's—they should have been dim, full of mystery, letters to the mind rather than the eye.

"Rembrandt has painted only Belshazzar and a courtier or two (taking a part of the banquet for the whole), not fribbled out a mob of fine folks. Then every thing is so distinct, to the very necklaces, and that foolish little prophet. What *one* point is there of interest? The ideal of such a subject is, that you the spectator should see nothing but what at the time you would have seen,—the *Hand* and the *King*,—not to be at leisure to make tailor-remarks on the dresses, or, Dr. Kitchener-like, to examine the good things at table.

"Just such a confused piece is his 'Joshua,' frittered into a thousand fragments, little armies here, little armies there—you should see only the *Sun* and *Joshua*. If I remember, he has not left out that luminary entirely, but for Joshua, I was ten minutes a finding him out. Still he is showy in all that is not the human figure or the preternatural interest: but the first are below a drawing school girl's attainment, and the last is a phantasmagoric trick,—'Now you shall see what you shall see, dare is Balshazar and dare is Daniel.'

"You have my thoughts of M., and so adieu!

"C. LAMB."

TO THE SAME.

"1827.

"My dear B. B.,—A gentleman I never saw before brought me your welcome present—imagine a scraping, fiddling, fidgetting, petit-maitre of a dancing school advancing into my plain parlour with a coupee and a sideling bow, and presenting the book as if he had been handing a glass of lemonade to a young miss—imagine this, and contrast it with the serious nature of the book presented! Then task your imagination, reversing this picture, to conceive of quite an opposite messenger, a lean, strait-locked, whey-faced Methodist, for such was he in reality who brought it, the Genius (it seems) of the 'Wesleyan Magazine.' Certes, friend B., thy 'Widow's Tale' is too horrible, spite of the lenitives of Religion, to embody in verse; I hold prose to be the appropriate expositor of such atrocities! No offence, but it is a cordial that makes the heart sick. Still thy skill in compounding it I do not deny. I turn to what

gave me less mingled pleasure. I find mark'd with pencil these pages in thy pretty book, and fear I have been penurious.

"Page 52, 53—Capital.
" 59—6th stanza, exquisite simile.
" 61—11th stanza, equally good.
" 108—3rd stanza, I long to see Van Balen.
" 111—A downright good sonnet.
Dixi.
" 153—Lines at the bottom.

So you see, I read, hear, and *mark*, if I don't learn. In short this little volume is no discredit to any of your former, and betrays none of the senility you fear about. Apropos of Van Balen, an artist who painted me lately, had painted a blackamoor praying, and not filling his canvas, stuffed in his little girl aside of Blackey, gaping at him unmeaningly; and then didn't know what to call it. Now, for a picture to be promoted to the Exhibition (Suffolk Street) as *Historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christen it the 'Young Catechist' and furbish'd it with dialogue following, which dubb'd it an Historical Painting. Nothing to a friend at need.

While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
Painter, who is she that stayeth
By, with skin of whitest lustre;
Sunny locks, a shining cluster;
Saint-like seeming to direct him
To the Power that must protect him?
Is she of the heav'n-born Three,
Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?
Or some Cherub?

They you mention
Far transcend my weak invention.
'Tis a simple Christian child,
Missionary young and mild,
From her store of script'ral knowledge
(Bible-taught without a college),
Which by reading she could gather,
Teaches him to say Our Father
To the common Parent, who
Colour not respects, nor hue.
White and black in Him have part,
Who looks not to the skin, but heart.

When I'd done it, the artist (who had clapt in Miss merely as a fill-space) swore I exprest his full meaning, and the damosel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures, seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful *lignum mortis*. By the bye, is the widow likely to marry again?

"I am giving the fruit of my old play reading at the Museum to Hone, who sets forth a portion weekly in the Table Book. Do you see it? How is Mitford?—I'll just hint that the pitcher, the cord and the bowl are a little too often repeated (*passim*) in your book, and that in page 17, last line but 4, *him* is put for *he;* but the poor widow, I take it, had small leisure for grammatical niceties. Don't you see, there's *he, myself*, and *him;* why not both *him?*—likewise *imperviously* is cruelly spelt *imperiously*. These are trifles, and I honestly like your book and you for giving it, though I really am ashamed of so many presents. I can think of no news, therefore I will end with mine and Mary's kindest remembrances to you and yours,

"C. L."

TO PETER GEORGE PATMORE.[1]

"Londres, Julie 19th, 1827.

"Dear P.,—I am so poorly. I have been to a funeral, where I made a pun, to the consternation of the rest of the mourners. And we had wine. I can't describe to you the howl which the widow set up at proper intervals. Dash could; for it was not unlike what he makes.

"The letter I sent you was one directed to the care of Edward White, India House, for Mrs. Hazlitt. *Which* Mrs. H. I don't yet know; but Allsop has taken it to

[1] [Babson's "Eliana," 1866, p. 434. First printed in "My Friends and Acquaintance," by Patmore, 1854. Mr. Peter George Patmore was at one period a reader at Colburn's; he resided for some time abroad, and during many years was successfully connected with Colburn's "Court Journal." When I first saw Mr. Patmore, he lived in a cottage at Mill Hill, on the right side of the road from Hendon; and his mother, a very aged woman, lived with him. He married a Miss Robertson, by whom he had two sons and a daughter.]

France on speculation. Really it is embarrassing. There is Mrs. present H., Mrs. late H., and Mrs. John H., and to which of the three Mrs. Wigginses it appertains, I know not. I wanted to open it; but 'tis transportation.

"I am sorry you are plagued about your book.[1] I would strongly recommend you to take for one story Massinger's 'Old Law.' It is exquisite. I can think of no other.

"Dash is frightful this morning. He whines and stands up on his hind legs. He misses Becky, who is gone to town. I took him to Barnet the other day, and he couldn't eat his vittles after it. Pray God his intellectuals be not slipping.

"Mary is gone out for some soles. I suppose 'tis no use to ask you to come and partake of 'em; else there is a steam vessel.

"I am doing a tragi-comedy in two acts, and have got on tolerably; but it will be refused, or worse. I never had luck with any thing my name was put to.

O, I am so poorly! I *waked* it at my cousin's the bookbinder,[2] who is now with God; or, if he is not, 'tis no fault of mine.

"We hope the Frank wines do not disagree with Mrs. Patmore. By the way, I like her.

"Did you ever taste frogs? Get them if you can. They are like little Lilliput rabbits, only a thought nicer.

"How sick I am!—not of the world, but of the Widow Shrub.[3] She's sworn under £6,000; but I think she perjured herself. She howls in E *la*, and I comfort her in B flat. You understand music?

If you havn't got Massinger, you have nothing to do but go to the first Bibliothèque you can light upon at Boulogne, and ask for it (Gifford's edition); and if they

[1] [The volume of "Tales," which Mr. Patmore had in hand, and for which Lamb gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Moxon, May 3rd, 1828.]

[2] [The individual, perhaps, who is referred to in "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874.]

[3] [As Lamb refers to the loss of a relation below, it may be surmised that by the widow he signifies his brother John's relict. John Lamb had died as far back as 1822, leaving Charles executor; and the business was not finished, owing to legal complications, even in 1829, as the course of the correspondence will shew.]

havn't got it you can have 'Athalie' par Monsieur Racine, and make the best of it. But that 'Old Law' is delicious.

"'No shrimps!' (that's in answer to Mary's question about how the soles are to be done).

"I am uncertain where this wandering letter may reach you. What you mean by Poste Restante, God knows. Do you mean I must pay the postage? So I do—to Dover.

"We had a merry passage with the widow at the Commons. She was howling—part howling and part giving directions to the proctor—when crash! down went my sister through a crazy chair, and made the clerks grin, and I grinned, and the widow tittered, and then I knew that she was not inconsolable. Mary was more frightened than hurt.

"She'd make a good match for any body (by she, I mean the widow).

> 'If he bring but a *relict* away,
> He is happy, nor heard to complain.'
>
> SHENSTONE.

"Procter has got a wen growing out at the nape of his neck, which his wife wants him to have cut off; but I think it rather an agreeable excrescence—like his poetry, redundant. Hone has hanged himself for debt. Godwin was taken up for picking pockets. Moxon has fallen in love with Emma, our nut-brown maid. Becky takes to bad courses. Her father was blown up in a steam machine. The coroner found it 'insanity.' I should not like him to sit on my letter.

"Do you observe my direction. Is it Gallic—classical? Do try and get some frogs. You must ask for 'grenouilles' (green eels). They don't understand 'frogs,' though 'tis a common phrase with us.

"If you go through Bulloign (Boulogne), inquire if Old Godfrey is living, and how he got home from the Crusades. He must be a very old man.

"If there is any thing in politics or literature in France, keep it till I see you again, for I'm in no hurry. Chatty Briant [Chateaubriand] is well, I hope.

"I think I have no more news; only give both our loves

(all three, says Dash) to Mrs. Patmore, and bid her get quite well, as I am at present, bating qualms and the grief incident to losing a valuable relation. "C. L."

Mrs. Shelley had visited Lamb at Islington, where Allsop once met her and Mrs. Williams. He (Allsop) knew Mrs. Shelley from her likeness to a picture by Titian in the Louvre, ... "Hers seemed a face, as Hazlitt remarked when he pointed it out to me, that should be kept to acquire likeness." Hazlitt and Allsop met in Paris.[1] This cordial and chatty letter to the wife of a man upon whom Lamb had been tolerably lavish of adverse criticism is a curious sample of the writer's *neutrality*. But at the same time, we have to recollect that Mrs. Shelley was the daughter of Godwin, who lay under exceptional obligations to Lamb for aid in the moment of supreme need.

TO MRS. SHELLEY.[2]

"Enfield, July 26th, 1827.

"Dear Mrs. Shelley,—At the risk of throwing away some fine thoughts, I must write to say how pleased we were with your very kind remembering of us (who have unkindly run away from all our friends) before you go. Perhaps you are gone, and then my tropes are wasted. If any piece of better fortune has lighted upon you than you expected, but less than we wish you, we are rejoiced. We are here trying to like solitude, but have scarce enough to justify the experiment. We get some, however. The six days are our Sabbath; the seventh——why, Cockneys will come for a little fresh air, and so——

"But by *your month*, or October at furthest, we hope to see Islington: I like a giant refreshed with the leaving off of wine, and Mary, pining for Mr. Moxon's books and Mr. Moxon's society. Then we shall meet.

"I am busy with a farce in two acts, the incidents tragi-comic. I can do the dialogue *commey for:* but the damned plot—I believe I must omit it altogether. The scenes

[1] [Allsop's "Recollections of Coleridge," 1864, p. 120.]
[2] [Babson's "Eliana," 1866, p. 420.]

come after one another like geese, not marshalling like cranes or a Hyde Park review. The story is as simple as G[eorge] D[yer], and the language plain as his spouse. The characters are three women to one man; which is one more than laid hold on him in the 'Evangely.' I think that prophecy squinted towards my drama.

"I want some Howard Paine to sketch a skeleton of artfully succeeding scenes through a whole play, as the courses are arranged in a cookery book: I to find wit, passion, sentiment, character, and the like trifles: to lay in the dead colours,—I'd Titianesque 'em up: to mark the channel in a cheek (smooth or furrowed, yours or mine), and where tears should course I'd draw the waters down: to say where a joke should come in or a pun be left out: to bring my *personæ* on and off like a Beau Nash; and I'd Frankenstein them there: to bring three together on the stage at once; they are so shy with me, that I can get no more than two; and there they stand till it is the time, without being the season, to withdraw them.

"I am teaching Emma Latin to qualify her for a superior governess-ship; which we see no prospect of her getting. 'Tis like feeding a child with chopped hay from a spoon. Sisyphus—his labours were as nothing to it.

"Actives and passives jostle in her nonsense, till a deponent enters, like Chaos, more to embroil the fray. Her prepositions are suppositions; her conjunctions copulative have no connection in them; her concords disagree; her interjections are purely English 'Ah!' and 'Oh!' with a yawn and a gape in the same tongue; and she herself is a lazy, block-headly supine. As I say to her, ass *in præsenti* rarely makes a wise man *in futuro*.

"But I dare say it was so with you when you began Latin, and a good while after.

"Good-by! Mary's love.

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB."

[Hood's dog, Dash, which Lamb had for some time found rather unmanageable, acquired at last so portentous an ascendency, that its new owner requested his friend, Mr. Patmore, to take him under his care. This was presumably after Patmore's return to England, as in the

letter of July 19th, 1827, the dog was still in Lamb's possession.]

TO P. G. PATMORE.[1]

"Mrs. Leishman's, Chase, Enfield.
[Autumn of 1827.]

"Dear Patmore,—Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash?[2] (I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules and was improving—but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing.) Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore?* Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him! All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he won't lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time—but that was in *Hyder*-Ally's time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse

[1] "My Friends and Acquaintance," by Patmore, 1854, i. 32-35.

[2] A large and very handsome dog, of a rather curious and singularly sagacious breed, which had belonged to Thomas Hood, and was transferred by him to the Lambs. This dog, by its wilfulness and vagaries, became so troublesome to Charles Lamb, whom it always insisted on accompanying in his rambles, that his sister begged Patmore to accept him—"if only out of charity," said Miss Lamb; "for, if we keep him much longer, he'll be the death of Charles." Patmore readily undertook the charge; and the animal, finding himself in the keeping of one who knew what dog-decorum was, subsided into the best-bred and best-behaved of animals.—*Note abridged from Mr. Patmore.*

Mrs. Patmore and the children. They'd have more sense than he! He'd be like a Fool kept in the family to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. 'You might teach him the mad dance set to the mad howl. Madge Owl-et would be nothing to him. 'My! how he capers!' (One of the children speaks this.)

[Here three lines are erased.]

What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but I remember you don't read German;[1] but Mrs. Patmore may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—'Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid a fire or a precipice:"—which, I think, is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we.

"If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast that all is not right with him, muzzle him, and lead him in a string (common pack-thread will do, he don't care for twist) to Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted any thing, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

"We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Chase, Enfield, where, if you come a-hunting, we can give you cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor; but that, you know, does not make her one. I knew a jailor (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

"Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. Patmore's regimen. I send my love in a —— to Dash.

"C. LAMB.

"Seriously, I wish you would call on Hood when you are that way. He's a capital fellow! I sent him a couple

[1] [No more did Lamb; in an early letter to Coleridge, he spoke of himself as *homo unius linguæ*. It was probably a mere figment.]

of poems—one ordered by his wife, and written to order; and 'tis a week since, and I've not heard from him. I fear something is the matter.

"Omitted within:[1]

"Our kindest remembrance to Mrs. P."

[Here is a humorous letter to an old colleague in Leadenhall about the three Mrs. Hazlitts and the unpaid postage of White's letter, of which Lamb complains on the ground that White had gained promotion by his retirement, and that if he had remained at the India House the letter would not have been necessary. Lamb's own letter is marked Unpaid. He has already touched this subject in the letter to Patmore of July 19, 1827.]

TO EDWARD WHITE.[2]

"Enfield, [Aug. 1st], 1827.
"Coat & Badge Day.

"My dear White,—Never was man so puzzl'd about mortal letter as I about that you sent. Besides the two Mrs. Hazlitts, there was a third, Mrs. John Hazlitt, who has a boy abroad, and on that ground was a candidate, but my sagacity snuff 'd out the true Mrs. Wiggins, & Allsop has by this time deposited it at its destin^{n}, at Paris.

"I could but admire the quirk by which you attempt to saddle me with the postage. You come into my lodgings, and expect me to pay your rent, because if I had not quitted you would not have been charged with it. When I threw off my post, I resigned with it both emoluments & incumbrances. You are welcome to all. Mrs. Hazlitt the second might just as well charge Mrs. H. the second with the postage. It is a perfect insult upon my understanding. Besides, 'tis mean in a gentleman on the establishm^{t} & not to be thought on. Well, I forgive you & heartily commending you to mind your ledger, & keep your eye on Mr. Chambers' balances, which you understand better than these matters, subscribe your friend,

"C. L.

"Edward White, Esq., East India House."

[1] The postscript was written on the *outside* of the letter.
[2] [Now first published.]

[The next closes the Lamb and Stoddart correspondence; but is the only letter in my possession to Stoddart himself, one of the old Mitre-Courtiers:—

TO SIR JOHN STODDART.

[Aug. 9th, 1827.[1]]

"Dear Knight—Old acquaintance,—'Tis with a violence to the *pure imagination* (*vide* the 'Excursion' *passim*) that I can bring myself to believe I am writing to Dr. Stoddart once again at Malta. But the deductions of severe reason warrant the proceeding. I write from Enfield, where we are seriously weighing the advantages of dulness over the over-excitement of too much company, but have not yet come to a conclusion. What is the news? for we see no paper here; perhaps you can send us an old one from Malta. Only, I heard a butcher in the market-place whisper something about a change of ministry. I don't know who's in or out, or care, only as it might affect *you*. For domestic doings, I have only to tell, with extreme regret, that poor Elisa Fenwick (that was)—Mrs. Rutherford—is dead; and that we have received a most heart-broken letter from her mother—left with four grandchildren, orphans of a living scoundrel lurking about the pothouses of Little Russell Street, London: they and she—God help 'em!—at New York. I have just received Godwin's third volume of the 'Republic' which only reaches to the commencement of the Protectorate. I think he means to spin it out to his life's thread. Have you seen Fearn's 'Anti-Tooke?' I am no judge of such things—you are; but I think it very clever indeed. If I knew your bookseller, I'd order it for you at a venture: 'tis two octavos, Longman and Co. Or do you read now? Tell it not in the Admiralty Court, but my head aches *hesterno vino*. I can scarce pump up words, much less ideas, congruous to be sent so far. But your son must have this by to-night's post. . . . Manning is gone to Rome, Naples, &c., probably to touch at Sicily, Malta, Guernsey, &c.; but I don't know the map. Hazlitt is re-

[1] This letter is written on the same sheet of foolscap as Miss L.'s addressed to Lady S., which will be found at pp. 86-88 of "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874.

sident at Paris, whence he pours his lampoons in safety at his friends in England. He has his boy with him. I am teaching Emma Latin. By the time you can answer this, she will be qualified to instruct young ladies; she is a capital English reader: and S. T. C. acknowledges that part of a passage in Milton she read better than he, and part he read best, her part being the shorter. But, seriously, if Lady St—— (oblivious pen, that was about to write *Mrs.*!) could hear of such a young person wanted[1] (she smatters of French, some Italian, music, of course), we'd send our loves by her. My congratulations and assurances of old esteem. "C. L."

Lamb's desire for dramatic success was not even yet wholly chilled. In this summer he wrote a little piece on the story of Crabbe's tale of the "Confidant," which was never produced, but ultimately published in "Blackwood's Magazine." It runs on agreeably in melodious blank verse, entirely free from the occasional roughnesses of "John Woodvil," but has not sufficient breadth or point for the stage. He alludes to it in the following letter.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Aug. 10th, 1827.

"Dear B. B.,—I have not been able to answer you, for we have had, and are having (I just snatch a moment) our poor quiet retreat, to which we fled from society, full of company,—some staying with us, and this moment, as I write, almost, a heavy importation of two old ladies has come in. Whither can I take wing, from the oppression of human faces? Would I were in a wilderness of apes, tossing cocoa-nuts about, grinning and grinned at!

"Mitford was hoaxing you surely about my engraving; 'tis a little sixpenny thing,[2] too like by half, in which the

[1] [In his letter to Patmore, July 19th, 1827, Lamb refers for the first time to Moxon's attachment for Emma Isola. But perhaps he saw no immediate prospect of settlement. Compare the letter to Mrs. Shelley, *supra*.]

[2] See Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography," 1860, p. 174. The etching by Brook Fulham is, of course, pointed at.]

draughtsman has done his best to avoid flattery. There have been two editions of it, which I think are all gone, as they have vanished from the window where they hung,—a print-shop, corner of Great and Little Queen Streets, Lincoln's Inn Fields,—where any London friend of yours may inquire for it; for I am (though you *won't understand it*) at Enfield Chase. We have been here near three months, and shall stay two more, if people will let us alone; but they persecute us from village to village. So, don't direct to *Islington* again, till further notice. I am trying my hand at a drama, in two acts, founded on Crabbe's 'Confidant,' *mutatis mutandis*. You like the Odyssey; did you ever read my 'Adventures of Ulysses,' founded on Chapman's old translation of it? for children or men. Chapman is divine, and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity. When you come to town I'll show it you. You have well described your old-fashioned grand paternal hall. Is it not odd that every one's earliest recollections are of some such place? I had my Blakesware [Blakesmoor in the 'London']. Nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion; better if un—or partially—occupied; peopled with the spirits of deceased members of the county, and justices of the quorum. Would I were buried in the peopled solitudes of one, with my feelings at seven years old! Those marble busts of the emperors, they seemed as if they were to stand for ever, as they had stood from the living days of Rome, in that old marble hall, and I too partake of their permanency. Eternity was, while I thought not of Time. But he thought of me, and they are toppled down, and corn covers the spot of the noble old dwelling and its princely gardens. I feel like a grasshopper that, chirping about the grounds, escaped the scythe only by my littleness. Even now he is whetting one of his smallest razors to clean wipe me out, perhaps. Well!"

[The two next to Barton were pretty clearly posterior to August 10th of the present year, as in these the "Adventures of Ulysses" is first found and then sent.]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Chaseside, Enfield [August] 1827.

"My dear B. B.,—You will understand my silence when I tell you that my sister, on the very eve of entering into a new house we have taken at Enfield, was surprised with an attack of one of her sad long illnesses, which deprive me of her society, though not of her domestication, for eight or nine weeks together. I see her, but it does her no good. But for this, we have the snuggest, most comfortable house, with every thing most compact and desirable. Colebrooke is a wilderness. The books, prints, &c., are come here, and the New River came down with us. The familiar prints, the bust, the Milton, seem scarce to have changed their rooms. One of her last observations was, 'How frightfully like this room is to our room in Islington!'—our up-stairs room, she meant. How I hope you will come some better day, and judge of it! We have tried quiet here for four months, and I will answer for the comfort of it enduring.

"On emptying my bookselves I found an 'Ulysses,' which I will send to Anne Knight, when I go to town, for her acceptance—unless the book be out of print. One likes to have one copy of every thing one does. I neglected to keep one of 'Poetry for Children,' the joint production of Mary and me, and it is not to be had for love or money.[1] It had in the title page 'by the Author of Mrs. Lester's School.' Know you any one that has it, and would exchange it?

"Strolling to Waltham Cross the other day, I hit off these lines. It is one of the Crosses which Edward I. caused to be built for his wife at every town where her corpse rested between Northamptonshire and London.

> "A stately cross each sad spot doth attest
> Whereat the corpse of Eleanor did rest,
> From Herdby fetch'd—her spouse so honour'd her—
> To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.
> And, if less pompous obsequies were thine,
> Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline,
> Grudge not, great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses:
> Thou in thy life-time had'st thy share of crosses.

[1] [Curiously enough, no complete copy seems to be yet known.]

"My dear B. B.

"My head aches with this little excursion.

"Pray accept two sides for three for once,

"And believe me,

"Yours sadly,

"C. L."

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"1827.

"My dear B.,—We are all pretty well again and comfortable, and I take a first opportunity of sending the 'Adventures of Ulysses,' hoping that among us—Homer, Chapman, and Co.—we shall afford you some pleasure. I fear it is out of print; if not, A. K. will accept it, with wishes it were bigger; if another copy is not to be had, it reverts to me and my heirs *for ever*. With it I send a trumpery book; to which, without my knowledge, the editor of the Bijoux has contributed Lucy's verses; I am asham'd to ask her acceptance of the trash accompanying it. Adieu to Albums —for a great while—I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days, but my landlord's daughter (not at the Pot house) requested me to write in her female friends', and in her own; if I go to ——, thou art there also. O all-pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia! "C. L."

The following is an acknowledgment of some verses which Lamb had begged for Miss Isola's album.

"Aug. 28th, 1827.

"Dear B. B.,—I am thankful to you for your ready compliance with my wishes. Emma is delighted with your verses, to which I have appended this notice: 'The sixth line refers to the child of a dear friend of the author's, named Emma,' without which it must be obscure, and have sent them, with four album poems of my own, to a Mr. Fraser,[1] who is to be editor of a more superb pocket-book

[1] [James Fraser, founder and proprietor of the magazine which bears his name, and of which the first number appeared in February, 1830.]

than has yet appeared, by far! the property of some wealthy booksellers; but whom, or what its name, I forgot to ask. It is actually to have in it schoolboy exercises by his present Majesty and the late Duke of York. Wordsworth is named as a contributor. Fraser, whom I have slightly seen, is editor of a forthcome or coming review of foreign books, and is intimately connected with Lockhart, &c. So I take it that this is a concern of Murray's. Walter Scott also contributes mainly. I have stood off a long time from these annuals, which are ostentatious trumpery, but could not withstand the request of Jameson, a particular friend of mine and Coleridge.

"I shall hate myself in frippery, strutting along, and vying finery with beaux and belles, with 'future Lord Byrons and sweet L. E. L.s.' Your taste, I see, is less simple than mine, which the difference in our persuasions has doubtless effected. In fact, of late you have so Frenchified your style, larding it with *hors de combats* and *au desopoirs*, that o' my conscience the Foxian blood is quite dried out of you, and the skipping Monsieur spirit has been infused.

"If you have anything you'd like to send further, I dare say an honourable place would be given to it; but I have not heard from Fraser since I sent mine, nor shall probably again, and therefore I do not solicit it as from him. Yesterday I sent off my tragi-comedy to Mr. Kemble. Wish it luck. I made it all ('tis blank verse, and I think of the true old dramatic cut) or most of it, in the green lanes about Enfield, where I am, and mean to remain, in spite of your peremptory doubts on that head. Your refusal to lend your poetical sanction to my 'Icon,' and your reasons to Evans, are most sensible. Maybe I hit on a line or two of my own jocular; maybe not. Do you never Londonize again? I should like to talk over old poetry with you, of which I have much, and you, I think, little. Do your Drummonds allow no holydays? I would willingly come and work for you a three weeks or so, to let you loose. Would I could sell or give you some of my leisure! Positively, the best thing a man can have to do is nothing, and next to that perhaps—good works. I am but poorlyish,

[1] [Apparently the "Gem," of which we shall hear more.]

and feel myself writing a dull letter; poorlyish from company; not generally, for I never was better, nor took more walks, fourteen miles a day on an average, with a sporting dog, Dash. You would not know the plain poet, any more than he doth recognize James Naylor trick'd out *au deserpoy* (how do you spell it ?).

"C. LAMB."

Adopting a chronological principle, we have next to give place to a communication made to Mr. Barron Field, now returned from *Thiefland*, and invited to go down to Enfield to see his old friend, temporarily left alone by one of Miss Lamb's periodical attacks :—.

TO BARRON FIELD.

"October 4th, 1827.

"I am not in humour to return a fit reply to your pleasant letter. We are fairly housed at Enfield, and an angel shall not persuade me to wicked London again. We have now six Sabbath-days in a week for—*none!* The change has worked on my sister's mind to make her ill; and I must wait a tedious time before we can hope to enjoy this place in unison. Enjoy it, when she recovers, I know we shall. I see no shadow, but in her illness, for repenting the step! For Mathews—I know my own utter unfitness for such a task.[1] I am no hand at describing costumes, a great requisite in an account of mannered pictures. I have not the slightest acquaintance with pictorial language even. An imitator of me, or rather pretender to be *me*, in his 'Rejected Articles,' has made me minutely describe the dresses of the poissardes at Calais!—I could as soon resolve Euclid.[2] I have no eye for forms and fashions. I substi-

[1] Lamb had been asked for a Catalogue of Mr. Field's gallery, the latter justly believing he would write charmingly upon the subject, as he afterwards proved he could.

[2] [I have before me a copy of the second edition of this book by John Hamilton Reynolds, 8vo, 1826. The first item in it is the paper indicated by Lamb; it is called "An Unsentimental Journey, by Elia," and is supposed to give an account of the Lambs' trip to France in 1822. The imitation of Lamb's style is poor and transparent enough. Reynolds also wrote in the "London Magazine" under the signature of Edward Herbert. His sister married Thomas Hood.]

tute analysis, and get rid of the phenomenon by slurring in for it its impression. I am sure you must have observed this defect, or peculiarity, in my writings; else the delight would be incalculable in doing such a thing for Mathews, whom I greatly like—and Mrs. Mathews, whom I almost greatlier like. What a feast 'twould be to be sitting at the pictures painting 'em into words! but I could almost as soon make words into pictures. I speak this deliberately, and not out of modesty. I pretty well know what I can't do.

"My sister's verses are homely, but just what they should be; I send them, not for the poetry, but the good sense and good will of them. I was beginning to transcribe; but Emma is sadly jealous of its getting into more hands, and I won't spoil it in her eyes by divulging it. Come to Enfield, and *read it*. As my poor cousin, the bookbinder, now with God, told me most sentimentally, that having purchased a picture of fish at a dead man's sale, his heart ached to see how the widow grieved to part with it, being her dear husband's favourite; and he almost apologised for his generosity by saying he could not help telling the widow she was "welcome to come and look at it"—*e.g.* at *his house*—"as often as she pleased." There was the germ of generosity in an uneducated mind. He had just *reading* enough from the backs of books for the "nec sinit esse feros;"[1] had he read inside, the same impulse would have led him to give back the two-guinea thing—with a request to see it, now and then, at *her* house. We are parroted into delicacy.—Thus you have a tale for a Sonnet.

"Adieu! with (imagine both) our loves.

"C. Lamb."[2]

Lamb had not relaxed in his solicitude for Hone and his congenial publication, to which he was yet now and again a contributor:—

[1] "Ingenuas didicisse artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

[2] "Memoirs of Charles Mathews," by Mrs. Mathews, 1839, iii. 596-598.

TO WILLIAM HONE.

"Sunday, September 2nd, 1827.

"Dear Hone,—By the verses in yesterday's 'Table Book,' sign'd *,[1] I judge you are going on better; but *I want to be resolv'd.* Allsop promised to call on you, and let me know, but has not. Pray attend to this;[2] and send me the number before the present (pages 225 to 256), which my newsman has neglect'd. Your book improves every week. I have written here a thing in two acts, and sent it to Cov^t^ Gard.[3] "Yours,

"C. LAMB."

For the "T. B."

LINES FOR AN ALBUM.

Laura, too partial to her friends' enditing,
Requires from each a pattern of their *writing.*
A weightier trifle Laura might command;
For who to Laura would refuse his—*hand?*
C. L.

[Indorsed:]

Mr. Hone, 22, Belvidere Place, Southwark.

Hood, in his "Own," 1846, prints a letteret, purporting to have been written by him to Lamb. It arose, as he himself explains, out of the following circumstances:—

"As 'Elia' supplied the place of the pedagogue,[4] so once I was substitute for Lamb himself. A prose article in the 'Gem' was not from his hand, though it bore his name.[5]

[1] [The verses printed at p. 558, vol. ii., No. 45 of the "Table Book," are the only contributions with any such signature. They are subscribed "P." But they present no evidence of the condition or prospects of the periodical.]

[2] An instalment of the "Extracts from the Garrick Plays." This note was the envelope to the parcel.

[3] "The Wife's Trial." Lamb sent it to Charles Kemble on the 27th September, 1827; but it was not accepted: nor was it ever performed.

[4] [I do not recollect this incident. In the Essay on "The Old and New Schoolmaster" ("Elia," 1823, p. 111), Lamb describes his conversation with a mysterious person in a stage, who turns out to be a pedagogue.]

[5] Compare the letter to Barton, of Aug. 26, 1827, *suprâ.*]

He had promised a contribution, but being unwell his sister suggested that I should write something for him, and the result was the 'Widow,' in imitation of his manner. It will be seen that the forgery was taken in good part."

TO THOMAS HOOD.[1]

[1827.]

"Dear Lamb,—You are an impudent varlet; but I will keep your secret. We dine at Ayrton's on Thursday, and shall try to find Sarah and her two spare beds for that night only. Miss M. and her tragedy may be dished; so may *not* you and your rib. Health attend you.

"Yours, "T. HOOD, ESQ.

"Enfield.

"Miss Bridget Hood sends love."

TO THOMAS HOOD.

"Tuesday [September 18th, 1827].

"Dear Hood,—If I have any thing in my head, I will send it to Mr. Watts.[2] Strictly speaking, he should have all my album-verses, but a very intimate friend importun'd me for the trifles, and I believe I forgot Mr. Watts, or lost sight at the time of his similar *Souvenir*. Jamieson conveyed the farce from me to Mrs. C. Kemble; *he* will not be in town before the 27th.

"Give our kind loves to all at Highgate, and tell them that we have finally torn ourselves outright away from Colebrooke, where I had *no* health, and are about to domiciliate for good at Enfield, where I have experienced *good*.

'Lord, what good hours do we keep!
How quietly we sleep!'

See the rest in the 'Complete Angler.'

[1] ["Hood's Own," i., 563; Babson's "Eliana," 1866, p. 427.

[2] [Mr. Alaric A. Watts, who edited the "Literary Souvenir" and the "Poetical Album" between 1825 and 1837. The former publication extended to thirteen volumes, published between those years.]

"We have got our books into our new house. I am a dray-horse, if [I] was not asham'd of the indigested, dirty lumber, as I toppled 'em out of the cart, and blest Becky that came with 'em for her having an unstuff'd brain with such rubbish. We shall get in by Michael's Mass. 'Twas with some pain we were evuls'd from Colebrooke.

"You may find some of our flesh sticking to the door-posts. To change habitations is to die to them; and in my time I have died seven deaths. But I don't know whether every such change does not bring with it a rejuvenescence. 'Tis an enterprise, and shoves back the sense of death's approximating, which, tho' not terrible to me, is at all times particularly distasteful. My house-deaths have generally been periodical, recurring after seven years; but this last is premature by half that time. Cut off in the flower of Colebrooke! The Middeltonian stream and all its echoes mourn. Even minnows dwindle. *A parvis fiunt minimi!*

"I fear to invite Mrs. Hood to our new mansion, lest she should envy it, and hate us. But when we are fairly in, I hope she will come and try it. I heard she and you were made uncomfortable by some unworthy-to-be-cared-for attacks, and have tried to set up a feeble counteraction thro' the 'Table Book' of last Saturday. Has it not reach'd you, that you are silent about it? Our new domicile is no manor-house, but new, and externally not inviting, but furnish'd within with every convenience: capital new locks to every door, capital grates in every room; with nothing to pay for incoming; and the rent £10 less than the Islington one.

"It was built, a few years since, at £1,100 expence, they tell me—and I perfectly believe it. And I get it for £35, exclusive of moderate taxes. We think ourselves most lucky.

"It is not our intention to abandon Regent Street,[1] and West-End perambulations (monastic and terrible thought!), but occasionally to breathe the fresher air of the metropolis. We shall put up a bedroom or two (all we want) for occasional ex-rustication, where we shall visit—not be

[1] [Compare Miss Isola's letter of 1833 to W. Hazlitt junior, printed *post*.]

visited. Plays, too, we'll see—perhaps our own; Urbani Sylvani and Sylvan Urbanuses in turns; courtiers for a sport, then philosophers; old, homely tell-truths and learn-truths in the virtuous shades of Enfield, liars again and mocking gibers in the coffee-houses and resorts of London. What can a mortal desire more for his bi-parted nature?

"O, the curds-and-cream you shall eat with us here!

"O, the turtle-soup and lobster-salads we shall devour with you there!

"O, the old books we shall peruse here!

"O, the new nonsense we shall trifle over there!

"O, Sir T. Browne, here!

"O, Mr. Hood and Mr. Jerdan,[1] there!

"Thine,

"C. (URBANUS) L. (SYLVANUS)—(ELIA ambo)——

"Inclos'd are verses which Emma sat down to write (her first) on the eve after your departure. Of course, they are only for Mrs. H.'s perusal. They will shew, at least, that one of our party is not willing to cut old friends. What to call 'em I don't know. Blank verse they are not, because of the rhymes; rhymes they are not, because of the blank verse; heroics they are not, because they are lyric; lyric they are not, because of the heroic measure. They must be call'd Emmaics."

"The Hoods, 2, Robert Street, Adelphi, London."[2]

A letter of introduction to Colburn was given by Lamb to Moxon in the autumn of 1827. He was anxious for employment, as he had had a difference with Longman and Co., and there was already some understanding between him and Lamb's "nut-brown maid." The original is one of the writer's choicest specimens of penmanship.

[1] [William Jerdan, editor of the "Literary Gazette."]

[2] [This is an admirable letter—gay, buoyant, and witty. It was sent to one who must have thoroughly appreciated it.]

TO HENRY COLBURN, ESQ.[1]

"Enfield Chase Side,
"25th Sept., 1827.

"Dear Sir,—I beg leave in the warmest manner to recommend to your notice Mr. Moxon,[2] the bearer of this, if by any chance yourself should want a steady hand in your business, or know of any Publisher that may want such a one. He is at present in the house of Messrs. Longman & Co., where he has been established for more than six years, and has the conduct of one of the four departments of the Country Line. A difference respecting salary, which he expected to be a little raised on his last promotion, makes him wish to try to better himself. I believe him to be a young man of the highest integrity and a thorough man of business, and should not have taken the liberty of recommending him, if I had not thought him capable of being highly useful.

"I am, Sir,
"With great respect,
"Your h'ble servant,
"CHARLES LAMB."

[1] [Forster Coll., S. K. M., No. 26, orig.]

[2] [Moxon subsequently set up on his own account, with £500 advanced to him by S. Rogers. We first hear of him at Messrs. Hurst, Chance, and Co. in St. Paul's Churchyard. Hurst had been a partner in the house of Longman, set up for himself, and failed.]

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS TO OLLIER, ROBINSON, BARTON, LEIGH HUNT, COWDEN CLARKE, ETC. LAMB TAKES A HOUSE AT ENFIELD.

[1827-8.]

LAMB'S communications to Colburn's Magazine kept him in correspondence with Charles Ollier, and led to an interchange of many notelets, of which those below are attributable to the period just antecedent to Lamb's removal from Islington to a house of his own at Enfield, in September, 1827.

TO CHARLES OLLIER.

[1827.]

"Dear Ollier,—I send you two more proverbs, which will be the last of this batch, unless I send you one more by the post on THURSDAY; none will come after that day; so do not leave any open room in that case. Hood sups with me to-night. Can you come and eat grouse? 'Tis not often I offer at delicacies. "Yours most kindly,

"C. LAMB.

"Tuesday.
"Colebrooke Cottage, Colebrooke Row."

[On back:]
"C. Ollier, Esq."

TO THE SAME.

[1827.]

"Dear O.,—I leave it entirely to Mr. Colburn; but, if not too late, I think the Proverbs had better have L. signed to them, and reserve *Elia* for Essays *more Eliacal*. May I trouble you to send my Magazine, not to Norris, but H. C. Robinson, Esq., King' Bench Walk, instead?

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB.

"My friend Hood, a prime genius and hearty good fellow, brings this.

"Mr. Ollier."

TO THE SAME.

[1827.]

"Dear O.,—Pray let me have one Magaz^e, two if the Chinese jests are in; and send word if you think the editor will bear any more of them. I send a fresh batch, which is nearly all, and is the best you have had yet. Tell me explicitly on this head, for it teazes me to seem to be saddling the Magaz. with other people's things. You must speak loud to the bearer who is as deaf as a post.

"Yours, "C. LAMB.

"In case this finds you out, pray send my Mag. to H. C. Robinson, Esq., King's Bench Walks, Temple. In that case the Jests won't be left.

"Mr. Ollier, Mr. Colburn's, New Burlington Street."

TO THE SAME.

[1827.]

"Dear O.,—We lamented your absence last night. The grouse were piquant, the bucks incomparable. You must come in to cold mutton and oysters some evening. Name your evening; though I have qualms at the distance. Do you never leave early? My head is very queerish, and indisposed for much company; but we will get Hood, that half Hogarth, to meet you. The scrap I send should come in AFTER the 'Rising with the Lark.'

"Yours truly.

"Colburn, I take it, pays postages."

[On back:]
"Mr. Ollier, Mr. Colburn's, New Burlington Street."

After a series of occasional visits since 1825 to Enfield, where they had taken lodgings, and (for the sake of Miss Lamb in chief measure) sojourned sometimes for a long period, the brother and sister decided, in September, 1827, to reside altogether in that suburb, where they took what

Lamb described to Talfourd as "an odd-looking, gambogish-coloured house." The situation was far from picturesque, for the opposite side of the road only presented some middling tenements, two dissenting chapels, and a public-house decorated with a swinging sign of a Rising Sun; but the neighbouring field-walks were pleasant, and the country, as he liked to say, quite as good as Westmoreland.

It had been arranged that Crabb Robinson and Martin Burney were to be the first to greet the new householders. But Miss Lamb had unluckily, at this precise juncture, one of her periodical seizures.

TO H. C. ROBINSON.[1]

"Chase Side, Oct. 1st, 1827.

"Dear R.,—I am settled for life, I hope, at Enfield. I have taken the prettiest, compactest house I ever saw, near to Antony Robinson's;[2] but alas! at the expense of my poor Mary, who was taken ill of the old complaint the night before we got into it. So I must suspend the pleasure I expected in the surprise you would have had, in coming down and finding us householders.

"Farewell! till we can all meet comfortable. Pray apprise Martin Burney. Him I have longed to have seen with you; but our house is too small to meet either of you without *her* knowledge. "God bless you!

"C. Lamb."

His sister's illness was of long duration this time, and he thus, in December, expresses his misery in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dec. 4th, 1827.

"My dear B. B.,—I have scarce spirits to write, yet am harassed with not writing. Nine weeks are completed, and

[1] [S. K. Museum, Forster Coll., *orig.* Printed in Robinson's "Diary," 1869, ii. 384-5.]

[2] [Not related to H. C. Robinson, who records his death. The Diarist had a brother Thomas, who occurs frequently in the book, more especially the early years.]

Mary does not get any better. It is perfectly exhausting. Enfield, and everything, is very gloomy. But for long experience I should fear her ever getting well. I feel most thankful for the spinsterly attentions of your sister. Thank the kind 'knitter in the sun!' What nonsense seems verse, when one is seriously out of hope and spirits! I mean, that at this time I have some nonsense to write, under pain of incivility. Would to the fifth heaven no coxcombess had invented Albums!

"I have not had a Bijou, nor the slightest notice from Pickering,[1] about omitting four out of five of my things. The best thing is never to hear of such a thing as a bookseller again, or to think there are publishers. Second-hand stationers and old book-stalls for me. Authorship should be an idea of the past. Old kings, old bishops, are venerable; all present is hollow. I cannot make a letter. I have no straw, not a pennyworth of chaff, only this may stop your kind importunity to know about us. Here is a comfortable house, but no tenants. One does not make a household. Do not think I am quite in despair; but, in addition to hope protracted, I have a stupifying cold and obstructing headache, and the sun is dead.

"I will not fail to apprise you of the revival of a beam. Meantime accept this, rather than think I have forgotten you all. Best remembrances,

"Yours and theirs truly, "C. LAMB."

Leigh Hunt was now engaged in turning to account his recollections of Byron and Italy, and applied to Lamb for the loan of one of the portraits of him, with a view to its insertion in the work. Lamb recommended that by

[1] [William Pickering, the eminent publisher and bookseller. At this time his place of business was in Chancery Lane, and he must have recently formed the acquaintance of Alexander Dyce, who led him to take an interest in the old dramatists, and in other literature more robust than "Bijoux," "Carkanets" and "Souvenirs." In 1827, he published the prose works of Cowley and the "Northumberland Household Book," and under the auspices of Dyce and Mitford, he commenced in 1830 the "Aldine Poets." Pickering was an extraordinarily dilatory, unmethodical man, and allowed his affairs to fall into confusion. But though he died in embarrassed circumstances, his estate was found sufficient to pay his debts in full.]

Myers, for which Crabb Robinson saw him sitting at the artist's studio. We know from the last letter to Robinson, of October 1, 1827, that Miss Lamb was taken ill just before they moved into their house at Enfield; and from the letter beneath to Hunt, and others, it appears that a severe and prolonged attack of her chronic malady ensued.

TO LEIGH HUNT.[1]

[Enfield, before Dec. 20th, 1827.]

"Dear H.,—I am here almost in the eleventh week of the longest illness my sister ever had, and no symptoms of amendment. Some had begun, but relapsed with a change of nurse. If she ever gets well, you will like my house, and I shall be happy to show you Enfield country.

"As to my head, it is perfectly at your or any one's service; either Myers' or Hazlitt's,—which last (done fifteen or twenty years since) White, of the Accountant's Office, India House, has; he lives in Kentish town—I forget where, but is to be found in Leadenhall daily. Take your choice. I should be proud to hang up as an alehouse sign even; or, rather, I care not about my head or any thing, but how we are to get well again; for I am tired out.

"God bless you and yours from the worst calamity.

"Yours truly, "C. L.

"Kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hunt. H.'s is in a queer dress. M.'s would be preferable *ad populum*."

But when the next was written, Miss Lamb had recovered. Her restoration must have been sudden, as it often was, for the letter to Leigh Hunt did not precede this to Allsop by many days. The patient, however, remained weak, and they could not yet bear visitors.

[1] [The object of this letter, as I have partly explained, was to get a portrait of Lamb for his book called "Recollections of Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries," 1828, subsequently enlarged into "The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt," 1860. Lamb alludes to those which had been made of him by Myers and by Hazlitt, the latter in the costume of a Venetian senator (the "queer dress"). Both appear in Mr. Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866.]

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

"20th December, 1827.

"My dear Allsop,—I have writ to say that I hope to have a comfortable Xmas-day with Mary, and I cannot bring myself to go from home at present. Your kind offer, and the kind consent of the young Lady to come, we feel as we should do; pray accept all of you our kindest thanks: at present I think a Visitor (good and excellent as we remember her to be) might a little put us out of our way. Emma is with us, and our small house just holds us, without obliging Mary to sleep with Becky, &c.

"We are going on extremely comfortable, and shall soon be in capacity of seeing our friends. Much weakness is left still. With thanks and old remembrances,

"Yours, "C. L."

His sister's long illness, in conjunction perhaps with the good cheer attendant on Christmas, had operated rather mischievously on Lamb. Just at the end he seems to allude to some practice on Allsop's part of inserting notes in the 'Atlas' newspaper, to save postage. The "warning" was a twelve month's notice to the landlord at Islington, when Lamb had decided on giving up Colebrooke Cottage, and removing to Enfield. It does not exactly appear when it expired.

TO THE SAME.

"9th January, 1828.

"Dear Allsop,—I have been very poorly and nervous lately; but am recovering sleep, &c. I do not write to make engagements for particular days: but I need not say how pleasant your dropping in any Sunday morning would be. Perhaps Jameson would accompany you. Pray beg him to keep an accurate record of the warning I sent by him to old Pau., for I dread lest he should at the 12 months' end deny the warning. The house is his daughter's but we took it through him, and have paid the rent to his receipts for his daughter. Consult J. if he thinks the

warning sufficient. I am very nervous, or have been, about the house; lost my sleep, & expected to be ill; but slumbered gloriously last night—golden slumbers. I shall not relapse; you fright me with your inserted slips in the most welcome 'Atlas.' They begin to charge double for it, and call it two sheets. How can I confute them by opening it, when a note of yours might slip out, and we get in a hobble? When you write, write real letters. Mary's best love and mine to Mrs. A. "Yours ever,

"C. Lamb."

A rather long letter to Cowden Clarke bears interesting remarks on Leigh Hunt's "Companion" and Hazlitt's "Life of Napoleon," just out, and playfully reminds Clarke of his father's school at Enfield and "bonny Edward Holmes," a schoolfellow of Keats at Enfield, of whom Charles Clarke has preserved and printed "Recollections," and the rods, which used to be bought at the chandler's shop, and were raised a farthing since the spread of education.

TO C. C. CLARKE.

"Enfield, 25th Feb. [1828.]

"My dear Clarke,—You have been accumulating on me such a heap of pleasant obligations, that I feel uneasy in writing as to a Benefactor. Your smaller contributions, the little weekly rills, are refreshments in the desert; but your large books are feasts. I hope Mrs. Hazlitt, to whom I encharged it, has taken Hunt's *Lord B.* to the Novellos. His picture of Literary Lordship is as pleasant as a disagreeable subject can be made; his own poor man's Education at dear Christ's is as good and hearty as the subject. Hazlitt's speculative episodes are capital; I skip the Battles. But how did I deserve to have the book? The 'Companion' has too much of Madame Pasta. Theatricals have ceased to be popular attractions. His walk home after the play is as good as the best of the old 'Indicators.' The watchmen are emboxed in a niche of fame, save the skaiting one that must be still fugitive. I wish I could send a scrap for goodwill. But I have been most seriously

unwell and nervous a long, long time. I have scarce mustered courage to begin this short note; but conscience duns me.

"I had a pleasant letter from your sister, greatly over-acknowledging my poor sonnet. I think I should have replied to it, but tell her I think so. Alas! for sonneting, 'tis as the nerves are; all the summer I was dawdling among green lanes, and verses came as thick as fancies. I am sunk winterly below prose and zero.

"But I trust the vital principle is only as under snow. That I shall yet laugh again.

"I suppose the great change of place affects me; but I could not have lived in Town; I could not bear company.

"I see Novello flourishes in the Del Capo line, and dedications are not forgotten. I read the 'Atlas.' When I pitched on the Dedication, I looked for the Broom of 'Cowden knows' to be harmonised, but 'twas summat of Rossini's.

"I want to hear about Hone. Does he stand above water? how is his son? I have delay'd writing to him till it seems impossible. Break the ice for me.

"The wet ground here is intolerable, the sky above clear and delusive; but under foot quagmires from night showers, and I am cold-footed and moisture-abhorring as a cat; nevertheless I yesterday tramped to Waltham Cross. Perhaps the poor bit of exertion necessary to scribble this was owing to that unusual bracing.

"If I get out, I shall get stout, and then something will out—I mean for the 'Companion'—you see I rhyme insensibly.

"Traditions are rife here of one Clarke a schoolmaster[1] and a run-away pickle named Holmes; but much obscurity hangs over it. Is it possible they can be any relations?

"'Tis worth the research, when you can find a sunny day, with ground firm, &c. Master Sexton is intelligent, and for half-a-crown he'll pick you up a father.

"In truth, we shall be glad to see any of the Novellian circle, middle of the week such as can come, or Sunday, as

[1] [See note to the letter of 1821 *suprâ*.]

can't. But Spring will burgeon out quickly, and then we'll talk more.

"You'd like to see the improvements on the Chasé, the new cross in the market-place, the Chandler's shop from whence the rods were fetch'd. They are raised a farthing since the spread of education. But perhaps you don't care to be reminded of the Holofernes' days, and nothing remains of the old laudable profession but the clear, firm impossible-to-be-mistaken schoolmaster text hand with which is subscribed the ever-welcome name of Chas. Cowden C. Let me crowd in both our loves to all. C. L." [Added on the fold-down of the letter:] "Let me never be forgotten [*sic*] to include in my remembᶜᵉˢ my good friend and whilom correspondent, Master Stephen.

"How, especially, is Victoria?[1]

"I try to remember all I used to meet at Shacklewell. The little household, cake-producing, wine-bringing out, Emma—the old servant, that didn't stay, and ought to have stayed, and was always very dirty and friendly; and Miss H., the counter-tenor with a fine voice, whose sister married Thurtell. They all live in my mind's eye, and Mr. N.'s and Holmes's walks with us half [way] back after supper. Troja fuit!"

In 1828 Mr. Moxon, at the request of Mr. Hurst, of the firm of Hurst, Chance, and Co., applied to Lamb to supply an article for the "Keepsake," which he, always disliking the flimsy elegancies of the Annuals—sadly opposed to his own exclusive taste for old books—declined. It seems as if Hood's dog Dash had now been handed over to Moxon.

TO MR. MOXON.

"March 19th, 1828.

"My dear M.,—It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with 'Forget-me-Nots'—pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has,[2]

[1] [Victoria Novello.]
[2] [The contributions for the "Bijou."]

if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday; besides that, Emma has decided objections to her own and her friend's Album verses being published; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

"Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.

"C. L."

The writer was nowadays not often in so genial a mood as when he penned a few lines to Allsop, and the scrap, a little later on, to Hone.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[Enfield, May 1st, 1828.]

"Dear A.,—I am better. Mary quite well. We expected to see you before. I can't write long letters. So a friendly love to you all.

"Yours ever, "C. L.

"This sunshine is healing."

The following introduced Mr. Patmore to Mr. Moxon:—

TO MR. MOXON.

"Enfield, May 3rd, 1828.

"Dear M.,—My friend Patmore,[1] author of the 'Months,' a very pretty publication, [and] of sundry Essays in the 'London,' 'New Monthly,' &c., wants to dispose of a volume or two of 'Tales.' Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; but be that as it may, he will call upon you, *under favour of my recommendation;* and as he is returning to France, where he lives, if you can do anything for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I'd never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty friendly good fellow, and was poor John

[1] [See the letter to Patmore of July 19th, 1827.]

Scott's second, as I will be yours when you want one. May you never be mine!

"Yours truly, "C. L."

The literary efforts of Hone, meanwhile, were proving by no means advantageous to the undertaker, entertaining and permanently valuable as they were; and Lamb and other friends tried to assist him in setting up a business—a coffee-shop in Gracechurch Street—which his family might manage. The celebrated Edward Irving has been named in an earlier place in connection with Carlyle and Bernard Barton; his influence as a popular preacher was considerable; and to him Lamb, at Hone's request, wrote a letter of introduction, dated from Enfield, April 3rd, 1828, in which he stated that he availed himself of a slight acquaintance to introduce his "very respected friend Mr. Hone," "who is of opinion that your interference in a point which he will mention to you may prove of essential benefit to him in some present difficulties. I should not take this liberty if I did not feel that you are a person not to be prejudiced by an obnoxious name." What the result of this intercession was, does not transpire. But shortly after there is the annexed characteristic bit. Lamb had not only a constant thought for Hone, but he had not forgotten a much older friend than the Editor of the "Table Book," Mr. Walter Wilson, whom Lamb had known long before Wilson dreamed of becoming the biographer of Defoe. He judged doubtless that they were two men who would like to meet each other.

TO WILLIAM HONE.

[May, 1828.]

"Dear H.,—Valter Vilson dines with us to-morrow. Vell! how I should like to see Hone!

"C. LAMB.

"Enfield, Wednesday."

[Indorsed:]

"Mr. Hone, 22, Belvidere Place,
near the Obelisk, Southwark."

A good deal has been said by Lamb's critics and biogra-

phers about his propensity for indulgence in the pleasures of the bottle and the tankard. This habit was doubtless to a certain extent injurious; but Talfourd has sufficiently shown that the circumstances were such as to modify its baleful influence, and at the same time to disarm too uncharitable animadversions. But no one, in fact, has been so unsparing of Lamb's frailty in this respect as Lamb himself. So long ago as 1801, in a letter to Walter Wilson, he does penance for having somehow exceeded the bounds of strict decorum during a visit to his house; in the letters of Mary Lamb we come across many allusions to her brother's proneness to err under this head; and writing to Cary on June 10th, 1828, Lamb makes a clean breast of his unconquerable, not inexplicable, foible. "I long," he says, "to see Wordsworth once more before he goes home; but it would be at the expense of health and comfort my infirmities cannot afford. Once only I have been at a dinner party, to meet him, for a whole year past; and I do not know that I am not the worse for it now. There is a necessity for my drinking too much. . . . at and after dinner; I require spirits at night to allay the crudity of the weaker Bacchus; and in the morning I cool my parched stomach with a fiery libation. Thus I am aground in town, and call upon my London friends, and get new wets of ale, porter, &c.; then ride home, drinking where the coach stops, as duly as Edward set up the Waltham Crosses. This, or near it, was the process of my experience of dining at Talfourd's to meet Wordsworth. . . . ." He goes on to ask Cary to come to him rather than to ask him to see him at the Museum as usual, and as he expects Darley and Procter the following Sunday, suggests that he should accompany them. He wishes that Wordsworth would come too. There are beds at their service either at the house or at the inn.

Here at least was frankness. Lamb knew his weak side, and was not ashamed to confess his transgressions—he probably overstated them. But he had not far to go for countenance and sympathy; not a few of his set kept a little this side of strict sobriety; it was a common foible—the *lues bibendi*.

The literary intercourse with Ollier was still maintained,

and Lamb's trifles, as well as some Chinese jests, supplied by a friend (possibly himself, possibly Manning) continued to find their way into the Magazine.

TO CHARLES OLLIER.

[July 14th, 1828.]

"Dear Ollier,—I have received a most friendly letter from Mr. Colburn, and you will be kind enough to give him the enclosed answer. It needs no reply; it is impossible that any misunderstanding can arise. I shall have nothing to send him for this month, but when I feel in a proper mood, he shall have the best my suck'd brains can bring forth. "Yours most truly,

"C. L.

"I have written to the Jester, though I scarce know where to direct to him.

"Mr. Ollier, Mr. Colburn's, New Burlington Street."

The next shows that he had not lost sight of an old acquaintance, who was the means of assisting Godwin, and bringing Lamb himself into relations with the author of "Waverley."

TO B. R. HAYDON.

[August, 1828.]

"Dear Haydon,—I have been tardy in telling you that your 'Chairing the Member' gave me great pleasure;—'tis true broad Hogarthian fun, the High-Sheriff capital! Considering, too, that you had the materials imposed upon you, and that you did not select them from the rude world as H. did, I hope to see many more such from your hand. If the former picture went beyond this, I have had a loss, and the King a bargain. I longed to rub the back of my hand across the hearty canvas, that two senses might be gratified. Perhaps the subject is a little discordantly placed opposite to another act of Chairing, where the huzzas were Hosannahs; but I was pleased to see so many of my old acquaintances brought together, notwithstanding.

"Believe me, yours truly,

"C. Lamb."[1]

[1] Taylor's "Life of Haydon," ii. 224. Lamb's allusion to "another

Mr. Cowden Clarke married Miss Victoria Novello on the 5th July, 1828, and spent his honeymoon at the Greyhound at Enfield. The young couple did not see the Lambs, and when the letter which follows was written, autumn had set in, and Lamb, while he has a hit at the Clarkes for having "lurked at the Greyhound," endeavours to draw an inviting picture of his neighbourhood at the present season of the year. "The autumn leaves are dropping gold," Lamb writes; it may have been October. He also puts a query about Leigh Hunt's "Examiner."

TO C. C. CLARKE.

[Enfield, September, 1828.]

"Dear Clarke,—We did expect to see you with Victoria and the Novellos before this, and do not quite understand why we have not. Mrs. N. and V. [Vincent] promised us after the York expedition; a day being named before, which fail'd. 'Tis not too late. The autumn leaves drop gold, and Enfield is beautifuller—to a common eye—than when you lurked at the Greyhound. Benedicts are close; but how I so totally missed you at that time, going for my morning cup of ale duly, is a mystery. 'Twas stealing a match before one's face in earnest. But certainly we had not a dream of your appropinquity. I instantly prepared an Epithalamium, in the form of a Sonata—which I was sending to Novello to compose; but Mary forbid it me as too light for the occasion—as if the subject required anything heavy: so in a tiff with her I sent no congratulation at all. Tho' I promise you the wedding was very pleasant news to me indeed. Let your reply name a day this next week, when you will come as many as a coach will hold; such a day as we had at Dulwich. My very kindest love and Mary's to Victoria and the Novellos. The enclosed is from a friend nameless, but English in office, and a man whose accuracy of statement may be relied on with implicit con-

act of chairing," is to the picture of Christ, in which he introduced Wordsworth, Keats, and Hazlitt, the last-named looking on the Saviour *as an investigator*: it seems to have been executed in or about 1817. See "Memoirs of Hazlitt," 1867, i. 211.]

fidence. He wants the *exposé* to appear in a newspaper as the 'greatest piece of legal and Parliamentary villainy he ever remember'd,' and he had experience of both; and thinks it would answer afterwards in a cheap pamphlet printed at Lambeth in 8vo sheet, as 16,000 families in that parish are interested. I know not whether the present 'Examiner' keeps up the character of exposing abuses, for I scarce see a paper now. If so, you may ascertain Mr. Hunt of the strictest truth of the statement, at the peril of my head. But if this won't do, transmit it me back, I beg, per coach —or better, bring it with you. "Yours unaltered,

"C. Lamb."

One more letter, pleasantly redolent of the country, and of Lamb's love of long walks, nearly closes the correspondence with Clarke. It was written in the short winter days at the end of 1828, and the writer alludes to a feat accomplished by him at 53—an attempt at a revival of skipping-rope days, which strained his sinews.

"My dear three C.s,—The way from Southgate to Colney Hatch thro' the unfrequentedest Blackberry paths that ever concealed their coy bunches from a truant Citizen, we have accidentally fallen upon—the giant Tree by Cheshunt we have missed, but kept our chart to go by, unless you will be our conduct. At present I am disabled from further flights than just to skirt round Clay Hill, with a peep at the fine backwoods, by strained tendons, got by skipping a skipping rope at 53—*hei mihi non sum qualis;* but do you know, now you come to talk of walks, a ramble of four hours or so—there and back—to the willow and lavender plantations at the south corner of Northaw Church by a well dedicated to Saint Claridge, with the clumps of finest moss rising hillock fashion, which I counted to the number of two hundred and sixty, and are called 'Claridge's covers,' the tradition being that that saint entertained so many angels or hermits there, upon occasion of blessing the waters? The legends have set down the fruits spread upon that occasion, and in the 'Black Book of St. Albans,' some are named which are not supposed to have been introduced into this island until a century later. But waiv-

ing the miracle, a sweeter spot is not in ten counties round; you are knee-deep in clover, that is to say, if you are not above a middling man's height; from this paradise, making a day of it, you go to see the ruins of an old convent at March Hall, where some of the painted glass is yet whole and fresh.

"If you do not know this, you do not know the capabilities of this country, you may be said to be a stranger to Enfield. I found it out one morning in October, and so delighted was I that I did not get home before dark, well a-paid.

"I shall long to show you the Clump Meadows, as they are called—we might do that without reaching March Hall; when the days are longer we might take both, and come home by Forest Cross, so skirt over Pennington and the cheerful little village of Churchley to Forty Hill.

"But these are dreams till summer; meanwhile we should be most glad to see you for a lesser excursion—say Sunday next, you and *another*, or if more, best on a week-day with a notice, but o' Sundays, as far as a leg of mutton goes, most welcome.

"We can squeeze out a bed. Edmonton coaches run every hour, and my pen has run out its quarter. Heartily farewell."

A proposal to erect a memorial to Clarkson upon the spot by the way-side, where he stopped when on a journey from Cambridge to London, and formed the great resolution of devoting his life to the abolition of the slave-trade, produced from Lamb the following letter to the lady[1] who had announced it to him:—

[TO MRS. MONTAGU.]

[Enfield, 1828.]

"Dear Madam,—I return your list with my name. I should be sorry that any respect should be going on towards Clarkson, and I be left out of the conspiracy. Other-

[1] [Doubtless Mrs. Basil Montagu. This letter was originally printed in the "Athenæum" for 1835, p. 106, by Mr. Procter.]

wise I frankly own that to pillarise a man's good feelings in his lifetime is not to my taste. Monuments to goodness, even after death, are equivocal. I turn away from Howard's, I scarce know why. Goodness blows no trumpet, nor desires to have it blown. *We should be modest for a modest man*—as he is for himself. The vanities of life—art, poetry, skill military—are subjects for trophies; not the silent thoughts arising in a good man's mind in lonely places. Was I Clarkson, I should never be able to walk or ride near the spot again. Instead of bread, we are giving him a stone. Instead of the locality recalling the noblest moment of his existence, it is a place at which his friends (that is, himself) blow to the world, 'What a good man is he!' I sat down upon a hillock at Forty Hill yesternight—a fine contemplative evening,—with a thousand good speculations about mankind. How I yearned with cheap benevolence! I shall go and inquire of the stone-cutter, that cuts the tombstones here, what a stone with a short inscription will cost; just to say, 'Here C. Lamb loved his brethren of mankind.' Everybody will come there to love. As I can't well put my own name, I shall put about a subscription:

Mrs. [Montagu] . .	£0	5	0	
Procter . . .	0	2	6	
G. Dyer . . .	0	1	0	
Mr. Godwin . .	0	0	0	
Mrs. Godwin . .	0	0	0	
Mr. Irving . . .				a watch-chain,
Mr. —— . . .				the proceeds of — first edition.
	£0	8	6	

"I scribble in haste from here, where we shall be some time. Pray request Mr. [Montagu] to advance the guinea for me, which shall faithfully be forthcoming, and pardon me that I don't see the proposal in quite the light that he may. The kindness of his motives, and his power of appreciating the noble passage, I thoroughly agree in.

"With most kind regards to him, I conclude

"Dear madam, yours truly, "C. Lamb.

"From Mrs. Leishman's, Chase, Enfield."

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS TO BLANCHARD, BARTON, AND ALLSOP. ACQUAINTANCE WITH PROCTER AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM.

[1828-9.]

A PRESENT from a stranger evoked a courteous and cordial recognition.

TO LAMAN BLANCHARD.[1]

"Enfield, November 9th, 1828.

"Sir,—I beg to return my acknowledgments for the present of your elegant volume, which I should have esteemed without the bribe of the name prefixed to it. I have been much pleased with it throughout, but am most taken with the peculiar delicacy of some of the sonnets. I shall put them up among my poetical treasures.

"Your obliged Servant, "CH. LAMB."

The letters to Barton recommence.

[1] [Blanchard's "Poems," edited by Blanchard Jerrold, 1876, p. 5. This letter refers to Blanchard's "Lyric Offerings," 12mo, 1828, with a short dedication to Lamb. On the title-page of my copy occurs in the author's hand :—

"My dear friend,—Accept this with the serious regrets as an author, and the sincere regards as a fellow-admirer of poetry of

"Thine,
"L. B."

Blanchard, whom I well remember, and whom I often visited with my father at Union Place, Lambeth, had begun early to write verse. He took some of his boyish efforts to Mr. John Hunt, who received him with much kindness. He was editor of the "Courier" during its short Liberal career, and subsequently sub-editor of the "Examiner." But both Douglas Jerrold and he were originally apprenticed to Mr. Sydney, a printer in Northumberland Street, Strand.]

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Oct. 11th, 1828.

"A splendid edition of Bunyan's Pilgrim![1] Why, the thought is enough to turn one's moral stomach. His cockle-hat and staff transformed to a smart cock'd beaver and a jemmy cane: his amice grey to the last Regent-street cut: and his painful palmer's pace to the modern swagger. Stop thy friend's sacrilegious hand. Nothing can be done for B. but to reprint the old cuts in as homely but good a style as possible. The Vanity Fair and the Pilgrims there—the Silly-soothness in his setting-out countenance—the Christian Idiocy (in a good sense), of his admiration of the shepherds on the Delectable mountains; the lions so truly allegorical, and remote from any similitude to Pidcock's; the great head (the author's), capacious of dreams and similitudes, dreaming in the dungeon. Perhaps you don't know my edition, what I had when a child. If you do, can you bear new designs from Martin, enamelled into copper or silver plate by Heath, accompanied with verses from Mrs. Heman's pen.. O how unlike his own!

> 'Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy?
> Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?
> Wouldst thou read riddles and their explanation?
> Or else be drowned in thy contemplation?
> Dost thou love picking meat? or wouldst thou see
> A man i' the clouds, and hear him speak to thee?
> Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
> Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep?
> Or wouldst thou lose thyself, and catch no harm,
> And find thyself again without a charm?
> Wouldst read *thyself*, and read thou knowest not what,
> And yet know whether thou art blest or not
> By reading the same lines? O, then come hither,
> And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.
> 'JOHN BUNYAN.'

Show me any such poetry in any one of the fifteen forthcoming combinations of show and emptiness, 'yclept 'Annuals.' So there's verses for thy verses; and now let

[1] [It is curious that Barton should not have mentioned to Lamb that the edition was under the auspices of a common friend—Southey. But it did not appear till 1830.]

me tell you, that the sight of your hand gladdened me. I have been daily trying to write to you, but [have been] paralysed. You have spurred me on this tiny effort, and at intervals I hope to hear from and talk to you. But my spirits have been in an opprest way for a long time, and they are things which must be to you of faith, for who can explain depression? Yes, I am hooked into the 'Gem,'[1] but only for some lines written on a dead infant of the Editor's, which being, as it were, his property, I could not refuse their appearing; but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in first page, and whisked through all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the immodest candidateship. Brought into so little space—in those old 'Londons,' a signature was lost in the wood of matter, the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoiled them)—in short, I detest to appear in an Annual. What a fertile genius (and a quiet good soul withal) is Hood! He has fifty things in hand; farces to supply the Adelphi for the season; a comedy for one of the great theatres, just ready; a whole entertainment by himself for Mathews and Yates to figure in; a meditated Comic Annual for next year, to be nearly done by himself. You'd like him very much.

"Wordsworth, I see, has a good many pieces announced in one of 'em, not our 'Gem.' W. Scott has distributed himself like a bribe haunch among 'em. Of all the poets, Cary has had the good sense to keep quite clear of 'em, with clergy-gentle-manly right notions. Don't think I set up for being proud on this point; I like a bit of flattery, tickling my vanity, as well as any one. But these pompous masquerades without masks (naked names or faces) I hate. So there's a bit of my mind. Besides, they infallibly cheat you; I mean the booksellers. If I get but a copy, I only expect it from Hood's being my friend. Coleridge has lately been here. He too is deep among the prophets, the year-servers,—the mob of gentlemen annuals. But they'll cheat him, I know. And now, dear B. B., the sun shining

[1] [The set of this publication in the British Museum, according to the Catalogue, consists of four volumes only, beginning with 1822. The series was intended to give, in a handy form, "Select and entertaining Tales from recent works of merit."]

out merrily, and the dirty clouds we had yesterday having washed their own faces clean with their own rain, tempts me to wander up Winchmore Hill, or into some of the delightful vicinages of Enfield, which I hope to show you at some time when you can get a few days up to the great town. Believe me, it would give both of us great pleasure to show you our pleasant farms and villages.

"We both join in kindest loves to you and yours.

"C. Lamb *redivivus*."

The following closes the dated letters which remain of this year.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Dec. 5th, 1828.

"Dear B. B.,—I am ashamed to receive so many nice books from you, and to have none to send you in return. You are always sending me some fruits or wholesome pot-herbs, and mine is the garden of the Sluggard, nothing but weeds, or scarce they. Nevertheless, if I knew how to transmit it, I would send you 'Blackwood's' of this month, which contains a little drama, to have your opinion of it, and how far I have improved, or otherwise, upon its prototype.[1] Thank you for your kind sonnet. It does me good to see the Dedication to a Christian Bishop. I am for a comprehension as divines call it; but so as that the Church shall go a good deal more than halfway over to the silent Meeting-house. I have ever said that the Quakers are the only *professors* of Christianity, as I read it in the Evangiles; I say *professors*—marry, as to practice, with their gaudy hot types and poetical vanities, they are much as one with the sinful. Martin's frontispiece[2] is a very fine thing, let *C. L.* say what he please to the contrary. Of the Poems, I like them as a volume better than any one of the preceding; particularly, 'Power and Gentleness'—'The Present'—'Lady Russell;' with the exception that I do not like the noble act of Curtius, true or false—one of

[1] ["The Wife's Trial." See the letter to Procter of January 22nd, 1829, *infrâ*.]

[2] [To a new volume of poems by his Quaker friend.]

the grand foundations of the old Roman patriotism—to be sacrificed to Lady R.'s taking notes on her husband's trial. If a thing is good, why invidiously bring it into life with something better? There are too few heroic things in this world, to admit of our marshalling them in anxious etiquettes of precedence. Would you make a poem on the story of Ruth, (pretty story!) and then say—Ay, but how much better is the story of Joseph and his brethren! To go on, the stanzas to 'Chalon' want the *name* of Clarkson in the body of them: it is left to inference. The 'Battle of Gibeon' is spirited, again; but you sacrifice it in last stanza to the song at Bethlehem. Is it quite orthodox to do so? The first was good, you suppose, for that dispensation. Why set the word against the word? It puzzles a weak Christian. So Watts' Psalms are an implied censure on David's. But as long as the Bible is supposed to be an equally divine emanation with the Testament, so long it will stagger weaklings to have them set in opposition. 'Godiva' is delicately touched. I have always thought it a beautiful story, characteristic of the old English times. But I could not help amusing myself with the thought—if Martin had chosen this subject for a frontispiece—there would have been in some dark corner a white lady, white as the walker on the waves, riding upon some mystical quadruped; and high above would have arisen 'tower above tower a massy structure high'—the Tenterden steeples of Coventry, till the poor cross would scarce have known itself among the clouds; and far above them all the distant Clint hills peering over chimney-pots, piled up, Ossa-on-Olympus fashion, till the admiring spectator (admirer of a noble deed) might have gone look for the lady, as you must hunt for the other in the lobster. But M. should be made royal architect. What palaces he would pile! But, then, what parliamentary grants to make them good! Nevertheless, I like the frontispiece. 'The Elephant' is pleasant; and I am glad you are getting into a wider scope of subjects. There may be too much, not religion, but too many *good words* in a book, till it becomes (as Shelley says of Religion) a rhapsody of words. I will just name, that you have brought in the 'Song to the Shepherds' in four or five, if not six places. Now this is not

good economy. The 'Enoch' is fine; and here I can sacrifice 'Elijah' to it, because 'tis illustrative only, and not disparaging of the latter prophet's departure. I like this best in the book. Lastly, I much like the 'Heron;' 'tis exquisite. Know you Lord Thurlow's Sonnet to a bird of that sort on Lacken water. If not, 'tis indispensable I send it you, with my Blackwood, if you tell me how best to send them. 'Fludyer' is pleasant,—you are getting gay and Hoodish. What is the enigma? Money? If not, I fairly confess I am foiled, and sphynx must . . . . . *eat me*. Four times I've tried to write—eat me, and the blotting pen turns it into *cat me*. And now I will take my leave with saying, I esteem thy verses, like thy present, honour thy frontispicer, and right reverence thy patron and dedicatee, and am, dear B. B.,

"Yours heartily,

"C. LAMB.

"Our joint kindest loves to A. K. and your daughter."

Lamb continued occasional contributions to the "New Monthly," especially the series of "Popular Fallacies," wrote short articles in the "Athenæum," and a great many acrostics on the names of his friends. He had now a neighbour in Mr. Serjeant Wilde,[1] to whom he was introduced by Mr. Burney, and whom he held in high esteem, though Lamb cared nothing for forensic eloquence, and thought very little of eloquence of any kind; which, it must be confessed, when printed is the most vapid of all reading. What political interest could not excite, personal regard produced in favour of his new friend; and Lamb supplied several versified squibs and snatches of electioneering songs to grace Wilde's contests at Newark.

[The allegation of a temporary lukewarmth between Lamb and two of his friends, Talfourd and Robinson, disclosed in the letter to Procter, which immediately succeeds, is not unlikely to have had some basis in truth, for Lamb was at this conjuncture rather bound up with the Novello set; and as he puts it in a letter of 1800 to Manning, "Ever the new friend driveth out the old, *as the ballad*

[1] [Afterwards Lord Chancellor Truro.]

sings." But Talfourd was one of the gentlemen concerned, and is entitled to credence under the circumstances; and Talfourd positively avers that the coolness did not exist—that it was a fiction. As far as regard his brother's affairs, at any rate, the case stands altogether differently, and Lamb was only too serious in the statement which he here lays before Procter, probably citing the very terms of the document to which he refers. John Lamb, who died in 1822, and whose loss his brother felt too much to turn the matter into a jest,[1] had married a widow, who survived him, as was noticed at the time, but who, prior to his death, executed without his knowledge a will leaving certain property held in her own right to a daughter of her former marriage, Elizabeth, wife of Isaac Dowden. Charles Lamb was appointed executor under this instrument. Proceedings were taken against him by the representatives of Dowden, and in that exigency Lamb appealed to Procter. We shall find that the difficulty was of long duration, for it was engaging Lamb's attention, and doubtless occasioning him a great deal of worry, more than a twelvemonth later on.[2]

If the communication just beneath had been the laborious piece of mystification which Talfourd desired us to believe, it would have been hard to understand the precise sequence or significance of the hoax, and one would have merely regarded it as a fine example of the Lie Circumstantial. But it may be asserted that Lamb never in his life wrote more thoroughly in earnest.]

TO MR. PROCTER.[3]

"Jan. 19th, 1829.

"My dear Procter,—I am ashamed not to have taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been

[1] [Talfourd briefly and jauntily says (the italics are mine): "The following letter to his friend, who so prosperously combined conveyancing with poetry, *is a fair sample of Lamb's elaborate and good-natured fictions.* It is hardly necessary to say that the reference to a coolness between him and two of his legal friends is part of the fiction." Now I think, Mr. Justice Talfourd, that this is a fair sample, not of Lamb's fictions, *but of your own.*]

[2] [Letter to Louisa Martin, July 11th, 1830, printed *infrâ.*]

[3] [Printed in the "Athenæum" for 1835.]

pure invention. But jokes are not suspected in Bœotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn, and cattle, and Waltham markets. Besides, I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides but Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom at present I am on the best of terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the lifetime of my brother, in which I am named sole executor, by which she bequeaths forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under covert baron, unknown to my brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee simple, recoverable by fine—invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty; subject to leet and quit-rent; in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden, the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seemed entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body, that should not be born of his wife; for it seems by the law in India natural children can recover. They have put the cause into Exchequer process here, removed by *certiorari* from the native courts; and the question is, whether I should, as executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove it to the Supreme Sessions at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the Privy Council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a case like it in chap. 170, sec. 5, in Fearn's Contingent Remainders. Pray read it over with him dispassionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate *in usum* enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seised, &c.

"I had another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings. A few lines of verse for a young friend's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who

she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold.[1] Six lines—make 'em eight—signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be 'headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having albums.' I fled hither to escape the albumean persecution, and had not been in my new house twenty-four hours, when the daughter of the next house came in with a friend's album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. If I take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will albums be. New Holland has albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request

[1] [The following description from Quaritch's Catalogue for 1884, of Miss Isola's (afterwards Mrs. Moxon's) Album, may be of interest:—

"MRS. MOXON'S (Emma Isola) ALBUM OF AUTOGRAPH POEMS and Letters by famous men, comprising 32 original compositions by the undermentioned writers, in their own hand, bound in 1 vol. sm. 4to, *with portraits of Charles Lamb and Charles and Mary Lamb inserted, green morocco extra, with clasps*, £125. *Cir.* 1826-73

"No ordinary assemblage of autographs of doubtful interest, but a collection of choice thoughts in exquisite words, fine flowers of English literature, by men whose names are immortal.

"Charles Lamb. 'What is an Album?' a poem addressed to Miss Emma Isola, 26 lines.

"——— 'To Emma on her twenty-first Birthday,' a poem, 25 May, 1830.

"——— 'By Enfield Lanes,' a sonnet on Emma and Maria, without date.

"John Keats. 'To my Brother,' a sonnet on the birthday of his brother Tom, dated Nov. 18 (? 1814 or 1815).

"William Wordsworth. 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways,' three verses of his poem on Lucy, copied in his own hand on 18 March, 1837.

"——— 'Blessings be with them, and enduring praise,' five lines of a sonnet dated Rydal, 1838.

"Alfred Tennyson. 'When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,' four stanzas, undated.

"Thomas Moore. 'Woman gleans but Sorrow,' two stanzas, and note to Moxon, June, 1844.

"Leigh Hunt. 'Apollo's Autograph,' from an unpublished poem called the Feast of the Violets. Undated, *circ.* 1838."

As thirty-two compositions are mentioned above, there were probably many pieces in the book besides those enumerated.]

the ten lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast, what you admire. The lines may come before the law question, as that cannot be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter, pray resend it me, as a monumental token of my stupidity. 'Twas a little unthinking of you to touch upon a sore subject. Why, by dabbling in those accursed Albums, I have become a byword of infamy all over the kingdom. I have sicken'd decent women from asking me to write in Albums. There be dark jests abroad, Master Cornwall; and some riddles may live to be cleared up. And 'tis not every saddle is put on the right steed; and forgeries and false Gospels are not peculiar to the Age following the Apostles. And some tubs don't stand on their right bottoms, which is all I wish to say in these ticklish times. And so your Servant, "CH. LAMB."

Lamb was as unfortunate in his communications with the annuals, as unhappy in the importunities of the fair owners of albums. His favourite pieces were omitted; and a piece by Hood, called "The Widow," was, by a license of friendship which Lamb forgave, inserted in one of them. He thus complains of these grievances in a letter which he wrote on the marriage of the daughter of a friend to a great theoretical chemist.

TO MR. PROCTER.[1]

"Jan. 22nd, 1829.

"Don't trouble yourself about the verses. Take 'em coolly as they come. Any day between this and Midsummer will do. Ten lines the extreme. There is no mystery in my incognita. She has often seen you, though you may not have observed a silent brown girl, who for the last twelve years has rambled about our house in her Christmas holidays. She is Italian by name and extraction. Ten lines about the blue sky of her country will do, as it's her

[1] [Printed in the "Athenæum" for 1835, pp. 106-9.]

foible to be proud of it. Item, I have made her a tolerable Latinist. She is called Emma Isola. I shall, I think, be in town in a few weeks, when I will assuredly see you. I will put in here loves to Mrs. Procter and the Anti-Capulets [Montagus], because Mary tells me I omitted them in my last. I like to see my friends here. I have put my lawsuit into the hands of an Enfield practitioner—a plain man, who seems perfectly to understand it, and gives me hopes of a favourable result.[1]

"Rumour tells us that Miss Ouldcroft[2] is married. Who is Baddams?[3] Have I seen him at Montacute's? I hear he is a great chemist. I am sometimes chemical myself. A thought strikes me with horror. Pray heaven he may not have done it for the sake of trying chemical experiments upon her,—young female subjects are so scarce! An't you glad about Burke's case? We may set off the Scotch murders against the Scotch novels—Hare, the Great Unhanged.[4]

"Martin Burney is richly worth your knowing. He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder, on which an angel or two is still climbing, and some, alas! descending.[5] Did you see a sonnet of mine in Blackwood's last? Curious construction! *Elaborata facilitas!* And now I'll tell.[6] 'Twas written for 'The Gem;' but the editors declined it, on the plea that it would *shock all mothers;* so they published 'The Widow' instead. I am born out of time. I

[1] [The difficulty, already mentioned, about his brother's affairs.]

[2] [So Lamb wrote *Holcroft*, which is a key to his way of pronouncing the name. In one of his letters, he says, "I spell as I speak;" and in another he puts *brencheese* for bread and cheese.]

[3] [Mrs. Baddams (Louisa Holcroft), after her first husband's death, married the Baron de Merger, of Plessis la Barbe, near Tours. I visited them there in 1853. She died a few years ago without surviving issue.]

[4] [A tolerably substantial volume on the case of Burke and Hare, with some curious portraits and facsimiles, was produced in 1884 by Mr. George Mac Gregor, who styles it "A Fragment from the Criminal Annals of Scotland." It seems almost marvellous that such events could have taken place in such a locality as Edinburgh so near our own time.]

[5] [Lamb had in his thoughts his friend Hazlitt's attempt to paint the favourite subject of "Jacob's Dream."]

[6] ["The Gipsy's Malison." See letter to Procter of January 29 *infrâ*.]

have no conjecture about what the present world calls delicacy. I thought 'Rosamund Gray' was a pretty modest thing. Hessey assures me that the world would not bear it. I have lived to grow into an indecent character. When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed, 'Damn the age; I will write for Antiquity!'

"*Erratum* in sonnet.—Last line but something, for *tender* read *tend*. The Scotch do not know our law terms; but I find some remains of honest, plain, old writing lurking there still. They were not so mealy-mouthed as to refuse my verses. Maybe, 'tis their oatmeal.

"Blackwood sent me £20 for the drama.[1] Somebody cheated me out of it next day; and my new pair of breeches, just sent home, cracking at first putting on, I exclaimed, in my wrath, 'All tailors are cheats, and all men are tailors.' Then I was better. "C. L."

The next, written a few days later, contains Lamb's thanks for the verses he had begged for Miss Isola's album. They comprehended a compliment to Emma Isola, turning on the words Isola Bella.

TO MR. PROCTER.

[January, 1829.]

"The comings in of an incipient conveyancer are not adequate to the receipt of three twopenny post non-paids in a week. Therefore, after this, I condemn my stub[2] to long and deep silence, or shall awaken it to write to lords. Lest those raptures in this honeymoon of my correspondence, which you avow for the gentle person of my Nuncio, after passing through certain natural grades, as Love, Love and Water, Love with the chill off, then subsiding to that point which the heroic suitor of his wedded dame, the noble-spirited Lord Randolph in the play, declares to be the ambition of his passion, a reciprocation of 'complacent kindness,'—should suddenly plum down (scarce staying to

[1] ["The Wife's Trial."]

[2] [Lamb says elsewhere that, while he was at the India House he never mended his quills, but when he had to buy them he wore them to the stumps—which is, of course, what he means by his *stub*.]

bait at the mid point of indifference, so hungry it is for distaste) to a loathing and blank aversion, to the rendering probable such counter expressions as this,—'Damn that infernal twopenny postman' (words which make the not yet glutted inamorato 'lift up his hands and wonder who can use them'). While, then, you are not ruined, let me assure thee, O thou above the painter, and next only under Giraldus Cambrensis,[1] the most immortal and worthy to be immortal Barry, thy most ingenious and golden cadences do take my fancy mightily. But tell me, and tell me truly, gentle swain, is that Isola Bella a true spot in geographical denomination, or a floating Delos in thy brain? Lurks that fair island in verity in the bosom of Lake Maggiore, or some other with less poetic name which thou hast Cornwallized for the occasion? And what if Maggiore itself be but a coinage of adaptation? Of this pray resolve me immediately, for my albumess will be catechised on this subject; and how can I prompt her? Lake Leman, I know, and Lemon Lake (in a punch bowl) I have swum in, though those lymphs be long since dry. But Maggiore may be in the moon. Unsphinx this riddle for me, for my shelves have no gazetteer. "C. L."

A curious letter to Allsop, the key to which is missing, closes the correspondence of the first month of this year. It appears that one of Allsop's children was to go down to Enfield to stay with the Lambs, Mrs. Allsop having been recently confined.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

"January 28th, 1829.

"Dear Allsop,—Old Star is setting. Take him & cut him into Little Stars. Nevertheless, the extinction of the greater light is not by the lesser light (Stella or Mrs. Star) apprehended so nigh, but that she will he thankful if you can let young Scintillation (Master Star) twinkle down by the last coach on Sunday, to catch the last glimmer of the

[1] [In allusion to the name of the old Welsh chronicler, Giraldus de Barri, more usually known as Giraldus Cambrensis.]

decaying parental light. No news is good news; so we conclude Mrs. A. and little A. are doing well. Our kindest loves. "C. L."

The following letter contains a noble instance of Lamb's fine consideration and exquisite feeling in morality.

TO MR. PROCTER.[1]

"Jan. 29th, 1829.

"When Miss Ouldcroft (who is now Mrs. Beddam, and Bed-damn'd to her!) was at Enfield, which she was in summer-time, and owed her health to its sun and genial influences, she visited (with young lady-like impertinence) a poor man's cottage that had a pretty baby (O the yearning!), and gave it fine caps and sweetmeats. On a day, broke into the parlour our two maids uproarious. 'O ma'am, who do you think Miss Ouldcroft (they pronounce it Holcroft) has been working a cap for?' 'A child,' answered Mary, in true Shandean female simplicity. 'It's the man's child as was taken up for sheep-stealing.' Miss Ouldcroft was staggered, and would have cut the connection; but by main force I made her go and take her leave of her protégée. I thought, if she went no more, the Abactor or Abactor's wife (*vide* Ainsworth) would suppose she had heard something; and I have delicacy for a sheep-stealer. The overseers actually overhauled a mutton-pie at the baker's (his first, last, and only hope of mutton-pie), which he never came to eat, and thence inferred his guilt. *Per occasionem cujus* I framed the sonnet; observe its elaborate construction. I was four days about it.

'THE GIPSY'S MALISON.

'"Suck, baby, suck! mother's love grows by giving,
Drain the sweet founts that only thrive by wasting;
Black manhood comes, when riotous guilty living
Hands thee the cup that shall be death in tasting.
Kiss, baby, kiss! mother's lips shine by kisses,
Choke the warm breath that else would fall in blessings;
Black manhood comes, when turbulent guilty blisses
Tend thee the kiss that poisons 'mid caressings.

[1 First printed in the "Athenæum" for 1835, pp. 106-9.]

Hang, baby, hang! mother's love loves such forces,
Strain the fond neck that bends still to thy clinging;
Black manhood comes, when violent lawless courses
Leave thee a spectacle in rude air swinging."
So sang a wither'd beldam energetical,
And bann'd the ungiving door with lips prophetical.'

"Barry, study that sonnet. It is curiously and perversely elaborate. 'Tis a choking subject, and therefore the reader is directed to the structure of it. See you? and was this a fourteener to be rejected by a trumpery annual? forsooth, 'twould shock all mothers; and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, be damned! as if mothers were such sort of logicians as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility (or capacity of being hanged, if the judge pleases) of every infant born with a neck on. Oh B. C., my whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it?) at this damned canting, unmasculine age!"

There is a little Latin letter about the same time to the same friend. Martin Burney was taking a holiday at Enfield, having very little practice as a lawyer, and had requested Lamb to ask Procter, in case any client presented himself at Burney's chambers, to let him at once know.

TO MR. PROCTER.[1]

"Feb. 2nd, 1829.

"Facundissime Poeta! quamquam istiusmodi epitheta oratoribus potiùs quam poetis attinere facilè scio—tamen, facundissime!

"Commoratur nobiscum jamdiu, in agro Enfeldiense, scilicet, leguleius futurus, illustrissimus Martinus Burneius, otium agens, negotia nominalia, et officinam clientum vacuam, paululum fugiens. Orat, implorat te—nempe, Martinus—ut si (quòd Dii faciant) fortè fortunâ, absente ipso, advenerit tardus cliens, eum certiorem feceris per literas hûc missas. Intelligisne? an me Anglicè et barbarice ad te hominem perdoctum scribere oportet?

"C. AGNUS.

[1] [First printed by Procter in the "Athenæum" for 1835.]

"Si status de franco tenemento datur avo, et in eodem facto si mediate vel immediate datur *hæredibus vel hæredibus corporis dicti avi*, postrema hæc verba sunt Limitationis, non Perquisitionis.[1]

"Dixi. "CARLAGNULUS."[2]

[1] [This is in reference to the Dowden suit.]

[2] [Philarète Chasles ("Revue des Deux Mondes," Nov., 1842, p. 623), with that *curiosa infelicitas* belonging to the French treatment of all things English, tells his countrymen that Lamb was called Carlagnulus "par les savans." I do not think that anyone ever called him so except himself, and that only in one or two instances, where he writes to Procter or Barton in Latin.]

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS TO CLARKE, ROBINSON, BARTON, WILSON, NOVELLO, COLERIDGE, &c.

[1829.]

I HAVE now to give the last of the extant letters to Cowden Clarke.

[Edmonton, Feb. 1st, 1829.]

"Dear Cowden,—Your books are as the gushing of streams in a desert. By the way, you have sent no autobiographies.[1] Your letter seems to imply you had. Nor do I want any. Cowden, they are of the books which I give away. What damn'd Unitarian, skewer-soul'd things the general biographies turn out! 'Rank and Talent' you shall have when Mrs. May has done with 'em. Mary likes Mrs. Bedinfield much. For me, I read nothing but 'Astrea'[2]—it has turn'd my brain—I go about with a switch turn'd up at the end for a crook; and Lambs being too old, the butcher tells me, my cat follows me in a green ribband. Becky and her cousin are getting pastoral dresses, and then we shall all four go about Arcadizing.[3] O cruel Shepherdess! Inconstant, yet fair, and more inconstant for being fair! Her gold ringlets fell in a disorder superior to order! 'Come and join us.'

[1] [A capital series of thirty-three volumes of autobiographies, published by Messrs. Hunt and Clarke, an unfortunate firm in York Street, Covent Garden, where H. G. Bohn subsequently established himself; their failure involved great distress to many, including Hazlitt, who lost the stipulated payment for his "Life of Napoleon."]

[2] [One of the old pastoral romances, the author Honoré D'Urfé. The characters are shepherds and shepherdesses. It is to this that the text alludes.]

[3] [It is strange that the Roman poets should have selected for their pastoral paradise the bleakest part of Greece.]

"I am called the Black Shepherd—you shall be Cowden with the Tuft.[1]

"Prosaically, we shall be glad to have you both—or any two of you—drop in by surprise some Saturday night.

"This must go off.

"Loves to Vittoria. "C. L."

The following letter was written in acknowledgment of a parcel sent to Miss Lamb, comprising (what she had expressed a wish to have) a copper coal-scoop and a pair of elastic spectacles, accompanied by a copy of "Pamela," which having been borrowed and supposed to be lost, had been replaced by another in Lamb's library.

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"Enfield, Feb. 27th, 1829.

"Dear R.,—Expectation was alert on the receipt of your strange-shaped present, while yet undisclosed from its fusc envelope. Some said, 'tis a *viol da Gamba;* others pronounced it a fiddle; I myself hoped it a liqueur case, pregnant with *eau-de-vie* and such odd nectar. When midwifed into daylight, the gossips were at a loss to pronounce upon its species. Most took it for a marrow-spoon, an apple-scoop, a banker's guinea-shovel; at length its true scope appeared, its drift, to save the back-bone of my sister stooping to scuttles. A philanthropic intent, borrowed, no doubt, from some of the Colliers. You save people's backs one way, and break 'em again by loads of obligation. The spectacles are delicate and Vulcanian. No lighter texture than their steel did the cuckoldy blacksmith frame to catch Mrs. Vulcan and the Captain in. For ungalled forehead, as for back unbursten, you have Mary's thanks. Marry, for my own peculium of obligation, 'twas supererogatory. A second part of 'Pamela' was enough in conscience. Two Pamelas in a house are too much without two Mr. B.'s to reward 'em.

[1] [Clarke had grown bald, with scanty curly hair at the back of his head, and wore an artificial topknot. Mr. C. W. Reynell recollects him calling upon him about this time, and the curious effect of the appendage to which Lamb adverts.]

"Mary, who is handselling her new aerial perspectives upon a pair of old worsted stockings trod out in Cheshunt lanes, sends her love: I, great good-liking. Bid us a personal farewell before you see the Vatican.

"CHARLES LAMB."

The following letter exemplifies some of the most remarkable peculiarities of thought and intellectual sentiment which streaked, without darkening, Lamb's evening of life.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"March 25th, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,—I send you by desire Darley's very poetical poem. You will like, I think, the novel headings of each scene. Scenical directions in verse are Novelties. With it I send a few duplicates, which are therefore of no value to me, and may amuse an idle hour. Read 'Christmas;' 'tis the product of a young author, who reads all your writings. A good word from you about his little book would be as balm to him. It has no pretensions, and makes none; but parts are pretty. In Field's Appendix turn to a poem called the Kangaroo. It is in the best way of our old poets, if I mistake not.

"I have just come from Town, where I have been to get my bit of quarterly pension. And have brought home from stalls in Barbican the old 'Pilgrim's Progress,' with the prints—Vanity Fair, &c.—now scarce. Four shillings. Cheap! And also one of whom I have oft heard and had dreams, but never saw in the flesh—that is in sheepskin—'The whole theologic works of

Thomas Aquinas!'[1]

My arms ached with lugging it a mile to the stage; but the burden was a pleasure, such as old Anchises was to the shoulders of Æneas, or the Lady to the Lover in old romance, who having to carry her to the top of a high mountain—the price of obtaining her—clambered with her

[1] [He soon after gave it to Coleridge. See letter to Gilman of October 26, *post*.]

to the top, and fell dead with fatigue. 'O, the glorious old Schoolman!' There must be something in him. Such great names imply greatness. Who hath seen Michael Angelo's things—of us that never pilgrimaged to Rome—and yet which of us disbelieves his greatness? How I will revel in his cobwebs and subtleties, till my brain spins!

"N.B. I have writ in the old Hamlet—offer it to Mitford in my name, if he have not seen it. 'Tis woefully below our editions of it. But keep it if you like. What is M. to me?

"I do not mean this to go for a letter, only to apprize you, that the parcel is booked for you this 25th March, 1829, from the Four Swans, Bishopsgate. With both our loves to Lucy and A. K.

"Yours ever,

"C. L."

The following two letters,[1] addressed to Mr. Robinson, when afflicted with rheumatism, are in Lamb's wildest strain of mirth. In the first, he pretends to endure all the pain he believes his friend to be suffering, and attributes it to his own incautious habits: in the second he attributes the suffering to his friend in a strain of exaggeration, probably intended to make the reality more tolerable by comparison:—

TO MR. H. C. ROBINSON.

"April 10th, 1829.

"Dear Robinson,—We are afraid you will slip from us from England without again seeing us. It would be charity to come and see me. I have these three days been laid up with strong rheumatic pains, in loins, back, shoulders. I shriek sometimes from the violence of them. I get scarce any sleep, and the consequence is, I am restless, and want to change sides as I lie, and I cannot turn without resting on my hands, and so turning all my body all at once, like a log with a lever. While this rainy weather lasts, I have no hope of alleviation. I have tried flannels and embrocation in vain. Just at the hip joint

[1] [Robinson's "Diary," 1869, ii., 408-10.]

the pangs sometimes are so excruciating, that I cry out. It is as violent as the cramp, and far more continuous. I am ashamed to whine about these complaints to you, who can ill enter into them; but indeed they are sharp. You go about, in rain or fine, at all hours, without discommodity. I envy you your immunity at a time of life not much removed from my own. But you owe your exemption to temperance, which it is too late for me to pursue. I, in my life time, have had my good things. Hence my frame is brittle—your's strong as brass. I never knew any ailment you had. You can go out at night in all weathers, sit up all hours. Well, I don't want to moralise, I only wish to say that if you are inclined to a game at double-dumby, I would try and bolster up myself in a chair for a rubber or so. My days are tedious, but less so, and less painful, than my nights. May you never know the pain and difficulty I have in writing so much! Mary, who is most kind, joins in the wish! "C. LAMB."

[CONFESSION OF HOAX.]

(A WEEK AFTERWARDS.)

"I do confess to mischief. It was the subtlest diabolical piece of malice heart of man has contrived. I have no more rheumatism than that poker. Never was freer from all pains and aches. Every joint sound, to the tip of the ear from the extremity of the lesser toe. The report of thy torments was blown circuitously here from Bury. I could not resist the jeer. I conceived you writhing, when you should just receive my congratulations. How mad you'd be. Well, it is not in my method to inflict pangs. I leave that to Heaven. But in the existing pangs of a friend I have a share. His disquietude crowns my exemption. I imagine you howling, and pace across the room, shooting out my free arms, legs, &c., this way and that way, with an assurance of not kindling a spark of pain from them. I deny that Nature meant us to sympathise with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce—not so pleasant to the actor, indeed; but Grimaldi

cries when we laugh, and 'tis but one that suffers to make thousands rejoice.

"You say that shampooing is ineffectual. But, *per se*, it is good, to show the introvolutions, extravolutions, of which the animal frame is capable—to show what the creature is receptible of, short of dissolution.

"You are worst of nights, an't you? You never was rack'd, was you? I should like an authentic map of those feelings.

"You seem to have the flying gout. You can scarcely screw a smile out of your face, can you? I sit at immunity and sneer *ad libitum*. 'Tis now the time for you to make good resolutions. I may go on breaking 'em for anything the worse I find myself. Your doctor seems to keep you on the long cure. Precipitate healings are never good. Don't come while you are so bad; I shan't be able to attend to your throes and the dumby at once. I should like to know how slowly the pain goes off. But don't write, unless the motion will be likely to make your sensibility more exquisite.

"Your affectionate and truly healthy friend,

"C. LAMB.

"Mary thought a letter from me might amuse you in your torment."[1]

Even at the period to which we have come Lamb had not divested himself completely from his old dramatic associations; his farce, rejected for the stage, was accepted by Blackwood; and a song composed for it was now offered to Harley the comedian, to be introduced by him on the occasion of his forthcoming benefit. Harley had made his first appearance at Covent Garden, Sept. 16, 1815, as Lissardo in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of "The Wonder;" he survived Lamb many years, and spent a portion of his life in a small house in Bell and Horns Lane, Brompton, when that was a real country village. At one time he resided, however, at Highgate.[2] Hazlitt ("View of the

[1] [A facsimile of part of the letter is given in Robinson, p. 411.]

[2] [He died suddenly at the Princess's Theatre, while performing the part of Launcelot Gobbo in the "Merchant of Venice," on the 20th

English Stage," 1821, pp. 414, 420) does not mention Harley in connection with his maiden effort in 1815, and criticises not altogether favourably his performance of At-All in Cibber's "Double Gallant," at Drury Lane in 1817, where he also appeared in the farce of "Frightened to Death," as Jack Phantom. Lamb does not include him in his Essay "On some of the Old Actors," nor is he much remembered at present. He seems to have depended, like Buckstone and Toole, on a meretricious and monotonous personal mannerism.

As to the benefit, at which Lamb's song was to be made public, I see no account of it in Geneste.

TO [J. P.] HARLEY.

"Dear Sir,—Pray excuse the paper, which is all I have. Mr. Kenn[e]y a year ago said you would not mislike having the enclosed song to sing at your benefit in the character of "A Sentimental Butcher." The farce is to be printed in a Magazine, and the song is quite at your service. To the tune of "Billy Lackaday,"[1] or what you please. "Your hble. Servt.

"C. LAMB.

"Enfield, 20th May" [1829].

[Endorsed:]

"J. P. Harley, Esq.,
"91, Great Russell Street, Bedford Square."

Here is a short note to an old friend with whom Lamb occasionally corresponded, and whom he had known some thirty years. It is like the two others, on Defoe chiefly, and accompanied Lamb's Paper "On the Secondary Novels of Defoe," being written on the third side of a folio sheet of paper.

TO WALTER WILSON.

"May 28th, 1829.

"Dear W.,—Introduce this, or omit it, as you like. I think I wrote better about it in a letter to you from India

August, 1858. See a memoir of him in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1858, p. 421.]

[1] [One of Liston's parts.]

H.[1] If you have that, perhaps out of the two I could patch up a better thing, if you'd return both. But I am very poorly, & have been harassed with an illness of my sister's.

"The Ode was printed in the 'New Times'[2] nearly the end of 1825, and I have only omitted some silly lines. Call it a corrected copy. "Yours ever,

"C. Lamb.

"Put my name to either or both, as you like."

"Walter Wilson, Esq.,
"Burnett House, near Bath, Somersetshire."

Allsop had written a letter, in which he, without dreaming of such a thing, of course, alarmed Lamb by speaking of Coleridge as dead to his friends; but the *dead* came at the end of a line, and for the instant startled the reader. The episode elicited a noble avowal of unquenched and inalienable affection for the friend of his youth—the greater intellectual Ajax. Lamb harboured no resentment, however, and promises to write again to arrange a visit, about midsummer, in Allsop's company, to some of the old familiar places about town.

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[June, 1829.]

"At midsummer or soon after (I will let you know the previous day), I will take a day with you in the purlieus of my old haunts. No offence has been taken, any more than meant. My house is full at present, but empty of its chief pride. She is dead to me for many months. But when I see you, then I will say, Come and see me. With undiminished friendship to you both,

"Your faithful, but queer,
"C. L.

[1] [Lamb had already written two Defoe letters to Wilson, namely, on the 16th December, 1822, and on the 24th February, 1823. He wrote him another on the 18th May of this year. See *post*.]

[2] [The "New Times" was started by my great uncle, Dr., afterwards Sir John, Stoddart, in opposition to the old paper, and failed. Hazlitt used to say that, if one wished to keep a secret, the best way was to print it in Stoddart's paper. Some account of it may be found in a recent number of the "Nineteenth Century" Magazine.]

"How you frighted me! Never write again *Coleridge is dead* at the end of a line, and lamely come in with *to his friends* at the beginning of another. Love is quicker, and fear from love, than the transition from line to line."

The autumn brought with it indifferent health and spirits, and a consequent disinclination to leave home, or see anyone. Allsop had had another stroke of bad fortune, of which Lamb himself professes not to know the particulars—some Stock Exchange reverse, perhaps. But he wished him a happy escape from it, and engaged to come and see him and his Bijoux some day.

TO THE SAME.

[September, 1829.]

"Dear Allsop,—I will find out your Bijoux some day. At present, I am sorry to say, we have neither of us very good spirits; and I cannot look to any pleasant expeditions.

"You speak of your trial as a known thing, but I am quite in the dark about it; but wish you a safe issue most heartily.

"Our loves to Mrs. Allsop and children. "C. L."

Internal evidence fixes an imperfect letter to an unidentified correspondent, perhaps Allsop, in the autumn of 1829, when Hazlitt and his son, here referred to, were lodging at No. 3, not 36, Bouverie Street.

[TO THE SAME?]

(A portion of a letter.[1])

[1829.]

"—— Calamy is *good reading;* Mary is always thankful for books in her way. I won't trouble you for any in *my way*, yet having enough to read. Young Hazlitt lives, at least his father does, at 3 or 36 [36 I have it down with the

[1] [This first appeared in the "Autographic Mirror," without any intimation as to whence it came, or to whom it was addressed.]

6 scratch'd out] Bouverie Street, Fleet Street. If not to be found, his mother's address is Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Tomlinson's, Potter's Bar. At one or other he must be heard of. We shall expect you with the full moon. Meantime, our thanks. "C. L.

"We go on very quietly," &c.

Ten years have elapsed since we have heard of Joseph Cottle of Bristol, when Lamb acknowledged his poem of "Alfred." Mr. Procter was now desirous of obtaining a likeness of Cottle for his "Effigies Poeticæ," 1833, and applied through their common friend.

TO JOSEPH COTTLE.[1]

"Dear Sir,—It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied to accompany a selection of 'Likenesses of Living Bards' which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections, & could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, & returning it safely the instant the Copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty

"From an old friend
"& well-wisher,
"Chas. Lamb.

"London, 5th Nov., 1829."

[Indorsed:]
"Joseph Cottle, Esq., Bristol."

[1] [F. W. Cosens, *orig.*]

TO THE SAME.[1]

[1829.]

"Dear Sir,—My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, having had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited Drawing it is, as every one thinks that has seen it—the copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R.A.)—he purposes sending you back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that & your better favor, the 'Messiah,' which, I assure you, I have read thro' with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness & a New Testament-plainness about them which affected me very much.

"I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted lines 71 and '2, and had ended the period with

> 'The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound,—
> *When* to be heard again on Earthly ground?'—

two very sweet lines, & the sense perfect.

"And in page 154, line 68, 'I come, *ordained a world to save*,"—these words are hardly borne out by the story, & seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the Baptismal Candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the voice & Dove.

"You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopt, was coeval in its beginning with your own, & who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will ever see Bristol again; but if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L.

"My sister joins in cordial remembᶜᵉˢ, & I request the favor of knowing, at your earliest opportunity, whether the Portrait arrives safe, the glass unbroken, &c. Your glass broke in its coming.

"Morgan is a little better—can read a little, &c.; but cannot join Mrs. M. till the Insolvent Act (or whatever it

[1] [F. W. Cosens, *orig.*]

is called) takes place. Then, I hope, he will stand clear of all debts. Meantime, he has a most exemplary nurse and kind companion in Miss Brent.

"Once more, D^r^ Sir,
"Yours Truly,
"C. Lamb.

"I shall be uneasy till I hear you have received the Picture."

[Endorsed:]

"Joseph Cottle, Esq., Brunswick Square, Bristol."

Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke, we recollect, had been married as far back as July, 1828, and Lamb seems to have desired to honour the occasion with some nuptial poem; but the latter did not come to completion till more than a year after the event, and Lamb, in sending it to Novello, begs to be pardoned for the delay in furnishing the Epithalamium.

[Enfield, 6th Nov., 1829.]

"My dear Novello,—I am afraid I shall appear rather tardy in offering my congratulations, however sincere, upon your daughter's marriage. The truth is I had put together a little Serenata upon the occasion, but was prevented from sending it by my sister, to whose judgment I am apt to defer too much in these kind of things; so that, now I have her consent, the offering, I am afraid, will have lost the grace of seasonableness. Such as it is, I send it. She thinks it a little too old-fashioned in the manner, too much like what they wrote a century back. But I cannot write in the modern style, if I try ever so hard. I have attended to the proper divisions for the music, and you will have little difficulty in composing it. If I may advise, make Pepusch your model, or Blow. It will be necessary to have a good second voice, as the stress of the melody lies there:—

'SERENATA, FOR TWO VOICES,

On the Marriage of Charles Cowden Clarke, Esqre., to Victoria, eldest daughter of Vincent Novello, Esqre.

DUETTO.

Wake th' harmonious voice and string,
Love and Hymen's triumph sing,
Sounds with secret charms combining,
In melodious union joining,
Best the wondrous joys can tell,
That in hearts united dwell.

RECITATIVE.

First Voice.

To young Victoria's happy fame
Well may the Arts a trophy raise,
Music grows sweeter in her praise,
And, own'd by her, with rapture speaks her name.
To touch the brave Cowdenio's heart,
The Graces all in her conspire;
Love arms her with his surest dart,
Apollo with his lyre.

AIR.

The list'ning Muses all around her,
Think 'tis Phœbus' strain they hear;
And Cupid, drawing near to wound her,
Drops his bow, and stands to hear.

RECITATIVE.

Second Voice.

While crowds of rivals with despair
Silent admire, or vainly court the Fair,
Behold the happy conquest of her eyes,
A Hero is the glorious prize!
In courts, in camps, thro' distant realms renown'd,
Cowdenio comes!—Victoria, see,
He comes with British honour crown'd,
Love leads his eager steps to thee.

AIR.

In tender sighs he silence breaks,
The Fair his flame approves,
Consenting blushes warm her cheeks,
She smiles, she yields, she loves.

RECITATIVE.

First Voice.

Now Hymen at the altar stands,
And while he joins their faithful hands,
Behold! by ardent vows brought down,
Immortal Concord, heavenly bright,
Array'd in robes of purest light,
Descends, th' auspicious rites to crown.
Her golden harp the goddess brings;
Its magic sound
Commands a sudden silence all around,
And strains prophetic thus attune the strings.

DUETTO.

First Voice.

The Swain his Nymph possessing,

Second Voice.

The Nymph her Swain caressing,

First and Second.

Shall still improve the blessing,
For ever kind and true.

Both.

While rolling years are flying,
Love, Hymen's lamp supplying,
With fuel never dying,
Shall still the flame renew.'

"To so great a master as yourself I have no need to suggest that the peculiar tone of the composition requires sprightliness, occasionally checked by tenderness, as in the second air,—

'She smiles,—she yields,—she loves.'

Again, you need not be told that each fifth line of the two first recitatives requires a crescendo.

"And your exquisite taste will prevent your falling into the error of Purcell, who at a passage similar to *that* in my first air,

'Drops his bow, and stands to hear,'

directed the first violin thus:—

'Here the first violin must drop his *bow*.'

"But, besides the absurdity of disarming his principal performer of so necessary an adjunct to his instrument, in such an emphatic part of the composition too, which must have had a droll effect at the time, all such minutiæ of adaptation are at this time of day very properly exploded, and Jackson of Exeter very fairly ranks them under the head of puns.

"Should you succeed in the setting of it, we propose having it performed (we have one very tolerable second voice here, and Mr. Holmes, I dare say, would supply the minor parts) at the Greyhound. But it must be a secret to the young couple till we can get the band in readiness.

"Believe me, dear Novello,

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB."[1]

The following notes, undated, but of about 1829, were addressed to Coleridge, under the genial care of Mr. Gilman at Highgate. The Lambs were often at Highgate on Sundays from 1820 to 1825, as we ascertain from Coleridge's letters to Allsop; they met there, among others, the elder Mathews and his wife, who lived at Highgate Hill, and there must have been pleasant and varied talk.[2] Perhaps the first printed of these two actually belongs to a somewhat earlier place in the series. In the letter to Gilman of October 26, 1829, Lamb then expressly blames himself for not having been to Highgate "this long time."]

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"Dear C.—Your sonnet is capital. The paper ingenious,[3] only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper *manufactured of rags* for better preservation. I never knew before how the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire,

[1] [See "Recollections of Writers," by the Clarkes, 1878, pp. 168-9.]

[2] [Compare the letters to Coleridge and Gilman of May 1st and 2nd, 1821, *suprâ*.]

[3] Some gauzy tissue paper on which the sonnet was copied.

wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

"On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

"With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

"Yours ever,

"C. LAMB."

TO THE SAME.

"My dear Coleridge,—With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two forbids my rest; and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents me coming. I expect Field and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gilmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet.

"Yours (though shattered),

"C. LAMB."

"Tuesday."

A letter written about this time to a friend who had had a son born to him, and who desired him to bear Lamb's name, belongs to this year, though no date occurs upon it:—

TO MR. TALFOURD.

"Dear Talfourd,—You could not have told me of a more friendly thing than you have been doing. I am proud of my namesake. I shall take care never to do any dirty action, pick pockets, or anyhow get myself hanged, for fear of reflecting ignominy upon your young Chrisom. I have now a motive to be good. I shall not *omnis moriar*; —my name borne down the black gulf of oblivion.

"I shall survive in eleven letters, five more than Cæsar. Possibly I shall come to be knighted, or more! Sir C. L. Talfourd, Bart.!

"Yet hath it an authorish twang with it, which will wear out with my name for poetry. Give him a smile[1] from me till I see him. If you do not drop down before, some day in the *week after next* I will come and take one night's lodging with you, if convenient, before you go hence. You shall name it. We are in town to-morrow *speciali gratia*, but by no arrangement can get up near you.

"Believe us both, with greatest regards, yours and Mrs. Talfourd's.

"CHARLES LAMB-PHILO-TALFOURD.

"I come as near it as I can."[2]

An allusion to Rogers, worthy of both, occurs in a letter

TO BERNARD BARTON.[3]

"June 3rd, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,— . . . . To get out of home themes, have you seen Southey's 'Dialogues?'[4] His lake descriptions, and the account of his library at Keswick, are very fine. But he needed not to have called up the ghost of More to hold the conversations with; which might as well have passed between A. and B., or Caius and Lucius. It is making too free with a defunct Chancellor and Martyr.

"I feel as if I had nothing farther to write about. O! I forget the prettiest letter I ever read, that I have received from 'Pleasures of Memory' Rogers, in acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him on the loss of his brother.

"It is too long to transcribe, but I hope to show it you

[1] [Lamb's smile is said by Allsop to have been peculiarly sweet and fascinating. He tells us that, oddly enough, he once met with a man—a stockbroker in Throgmorton Street, who had one precisely identical with Lamb's.]

[2] The child who bore the name so honoured by his parents survived his godfather only a year, dying at Brighton, whither he had been taken in the vain hope of restoration, on the 3rd December, 1835.

[3] [A portion of this letter has been lost.]

[4] [Southey's "Sir Thomas More," 1829.]

some day, as I hope some time again to see you, when all of us are well. Only it ends thus, 'We were nearly of an age; he was the elder; he was the only person in the world in whose eyes I always appeared young.'[1] I will now take leave with assuring you that I am most interested in hoping to hear favourable accounts from you. With kindest regards to A. K. and you,

"Yours truly,

"C. L."

[1] [This particularly impressed Lamb, for he recalled his own old friend—almost more than brother—Richard Norris, of the Temple. In his letter to Robinson, January 20th, 1826, he says, "Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now."]

CHAPTER XV.

LETTERS TO BARTON, WILSON, AND GILMAN.

[1829-30.]

THE illness of Mr. Barton's daughter drew from Lamb the following expression of kindred loneliness and sorrow:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"July 3rd, 1829.

"Dear B. B.,—I am very much grieved indeed for the indisposition of poor Lucy. Your letter found me in domestic troubles. My sister is again taken ill, and I am obliged to remove her out of the house for many weeks, I fear, before I can hope to have her again. I have been very desolate indeed. My loneliness is a little abated by our young friend Emma having just come here for her holydays, and a schoolfellow of hers that was, with her. Still the house is not the same, tho' she is the same. Mary had been pleasing herself with the prospect of seeing her at this time; and with all their company the house feels at times a frightful solitude. May you and I in no very long time have a more cheerful theme to write about, and congratulate upon a daughter's and a sister's perfect recovery. Do not be long without telling me how Lucy goes on. I have a right to call her by her quaker-name, you know. Emma knows that I am writing to you, and begs to be remembered to you with thankfulness for your ready contribution. Her album is filling apace. But of her contributors one, almost the flower of it, a most amiable young man and late acquaintance of mine, has been carried off by consumption, on return from one of the Azores islands, to which he went with hopes of mastering the disease, came back improved, went back to a most close and confined

counting-house, and relapsed. His name was Dibdin, grandson of the Songster. "C. L."

What a lesson does the following read to us from one who, while condemned to uninteresting industry, thought happiness consisted in an affluence of time! Here Lucy Barton has recovered from her indisposition; but Miss Lamb is still away. It is a melancholy letter, though beginning in so gay a strain.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"Enfield Chase-side, Saturday, 25th July, A.D. 1829, 11 A.M.

"There—a fuller, plumper, juicier date never dropt from Idumean palm. Am I in the *date*-ive case now? if not, a fig for dates, which is more than a date is worth. I never stood much affected to these limitary specialities. Least of all, since the date of my superannuation.

'What have I with time to do?
Slaves of desks, 'twas meant for you.'

"Dear B. B.—Your handwriting has conveyed much pleasure to me in respect of Lucy's restoration. Would I could send you as good news of *my* poor Lucy! But some wearisome weeks I must remain lonely yet. I have had the loneliest time, near ten weeks, broken by a short apparition of Emma for her Holydays, whose departure only deepened the returning Solitude, and by ten days I have passed in Town. But town, with all my native hankering after it, is not what it was. The streets, the shops are left; but all old friends are gone. And in London I was frightfully convinced of this as I passed houses and places, empty caskets now. I have ceased to care almost about any body. The bodies I cared for are in graves, or dispersed. My old clubs, that lived so long, and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. When I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing Cross, 'twas heavy unfeeling rain, and I had no where to go. Home have I none, and not a sympathising house to turn to in the great city. Never did the waters of heaven pour down on a forlorner head. Yet I

tried ten days at a sort of a friend's house ;' but it was large and straggling,—one of the individuals of my old long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant companions, that have tumbled to pieces, into dust and other things; and I got home on Thursday, convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. Less than a month, I hope, will bring home Mary. She is at Fulham, looking better in her health than ever, but sadly rambling, and scarce showing any pleasure in seeing me, or curiosity, when I should come again. But the old feelings will come back again, and we shall drown old sorrows over a game of picquet again. But 'tis a tedious cut out of a life of fifty-four, to lose twelve or thirteen weeks every year or two. And to make me more alone, our ill-tempered maid is gone, who, with all her airs, was yet a home-piece of furniture, a record of better days; the young thing that has succeeded her is good and attentive; but she is nothing. And I have no one here to talk over old matters with. Scolding and quarrelling have something of familiarity and a community of interest; they imply acquaintance; they are of resentment, which is of the family of dearness.

"I can neither scold nor quarrel at this insignificant implement of household services; she is less than a cat, and just better than a deal dresser. What I can do, and do over-do, is to walk; but deadly long are the days, these summer all-day days, with but a half hour's candle-light and no fire-light. I do not write, tell your kind inquisitive Eliza, and can hardly read. In the ensuing Blackwood will be an old rejected farce of mine, which may be new to you, if you see that same medley. What things are all the Magazines now? I contrive studiously not to see them. The popular 'New Monthly' is perfect trash. Poor Hessey, I suppose you see, has failed—Hunt and Clarke too. Your 'Vulgar Truths' will be a good name; and I think your prose must please—me at least. But 'tis useless to write Poetry with no purchaser. 'Tis cold work

[1] [Not even in Procter's "Life of Lamb," 1866, where this letter is cited, is there any clue to the name; but it was probably at Montagu's that he stayed.]

[2] [Becky.]

authorship, without something to puff one into fashion. Could you not write something on Quakerism, for Quakers to read, but nominally addressed to Non-Quakers, explaining your dogmas—waiting on the Spirit—by the analogy of human calmness and patient waiting on the judgment? I scarcely know what I mean, but to make Non-Quakers reconciled to your doctrines, by showing something like them in mere human operations; but I hardly understand myself; so let it pass for nothing. I pity you for overwork, but, I assure you, no work is worse. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food. I bragged formerly that I could not have too much time. I have now a surfeit. With few years to come, the days are wearisome. But weariness is not eternal. Something will shine out to take the load off that flags me, which is at present intolerable. I have killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inch-meal just now. But the snake is vital. Well: I shall write merrier anon. 'Tis the present copy of my countenance I send, and to complain is a little to alleviate. May you enjoy yourself as far as the wicked world will let you, and think that you are not quite alone, as I am! Health to Lucia; and to Anna, and kind remembrances.

"Your forlorn "C. L."

The cares of housekeeping pressed too heavily on Miss Lamb, and her brother, whose tenancy apparently expired at Michaelmas, 1829, resolved, after a great struggle, to resign the dignity of a housekeeper for the independence of a lodger. A couple of old dwellers in Enfield, hard by his cottage, had the good fortune to receive them.

Two letters, to Novello and Dyer, bear no note of time. They are conjecturally placed here, because they were evidently written just after the domestication of the Lambs with Mr. and Mrs. Westwood[1] in the middle of October of the present year.[2] The exchange of hospitalities between them and their friends was of the good old-fashioned type. Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke speak of the "brilliant supper

[1] [Compare the letter to Wilson, 15th November, 1829, below.]

[2] [In the letter to Gilman of October 24th, Lamb speaks of the removal as having taken place less than a week before.]

parties at the alternate dwellings of the Novellos, the Hunts, and the Lambs, who had mutually agreed that bread and cheese ('old crumbly Cheshire' at Lamb's, at all events) with celery and Elia's immortalized 'Lutheran beer,' were to be the sole cates provided."[1]

TO VINCENT NOVELLO.

[October, 1829.]

"Dear Fugueist,
or bear'st thou rather
Contrapuntist?—

"We expect you four (as many as the table will hold without squeezing) at Mrs. Westwood's Table d'Hôte on Thursday. You will find the White House shut up, and us moved under the wing of the Phœnix, which gives us friendly refuge. Beds for guests, marry, we have none, but cleanly accomodings at the Crown and Horse-shoe.

"Yours harmonically, "C. L."

"Vincentio (what, ho!) Novello, a Squire,
"66, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields."

TO GEORGE DYER.[2]

"Dear Dyer,—My very good friend, and Charles Clarke's father-in-law, Vincent Novello, wishes to shake hands with you. Make him play you a tune. He is a damn'd fine musician, and, what is better, a good man and true. He will tell you how glad we should be to have Mrs. Dyer and you here for a few days. Our young friend, Miss Isola, has been here holiday-making, but leaves us to-morrow.

"Yours ever, "Ch. Lamb."

"Enfield.

"Emma's love to Mr. and Mrs. Dyer.[3]

"George Dyer, Esq., Clifford's Inn."

About the same time, the following letter was written, alluding to the same change.

1 ["Recollections of Writers," 1878, p. 19.]
2 [Apparently enclosed in the preceding.]
3 [This line is in a second hand, probably Miss Isola's.]

TO MR. GILMAN.

"Chase-side, Enfield, 26th Oct., 1829.

"Dear Gilman,—Allsop brought me your kind message yesterday. How can I account for having not visited Highgate this long time? Change of place seemed to have changed me. How grieved I was to hear in what indifferent health Coleridge has been, and I not to know of it! A little school divinity, well applied, may be healing. I send him honest Tom of Aquin;[1] that was always an obscure great idea to me: I never thought or dreamed to see him in the flesh, but t'other day I rescued him from a stall in Barbican, and brought him off in triumph. He comes to greet Coleridge's acceptance, for his shoe-latchets I am unworthy to unloose. Yet there are pretty pro's and con's, and such unsatisfactory learning in him. Commend me to the question of etiquette—'*utrum annunciatio debuerit fieri per angelum*'—*Quæst.* 30, *Articulus* 2. I protest, till now I had thought Gabriel a fellow of some mark and livelihood, not a simple esquire, as I find him. Well, do not break your lay brains, nor I neither, with these curious nothings. They are nuts to our dear friend, whom hoping to see at your first friendly hint that it will be convenient, I end with begging our very kindest loves to Mrs. Gilman. We have had a sorry house of it here. Our spirits have been reduced till we were at hope's end what to do—obliged to quit this house, and afraid to engage another, till in extremity I took the desperate resolve of kicking house and all down, like Bunyan's pack; and here we are in a new life at board and lodging, with an honest couple our neighbours. We have ridded ourselves of the cares of dirty acres; and the change, though of less than a week, has had the most beneficial effects on Mary already. She looks two years and a half younger for it. But we have had sore trials.

"God send us one happy meeting!—Yours faithfully,

"C. Lamb."

[1] [Compare the letter to Barton of March 25th, 1829.]

Lamb refers to his altered arrangements once more in a letter, acknowledging the receipt of Wilson's "Life of De Foe," in which a criticism from his pen was inserted, embodying the sentiments which he had expressed some years before.

TO MR. WALTER WILSON.

"Enfield, 15th November, 1829.

"My dear Wilson,—I have not opened a packet of unknown contents for many years, that gave me so much pleasure as when I disclosed your three volumes. I have given them a careful perusal, and they have taken their degree of classical books upon my shelves. De Foe was always my darling; but what darkness was I in as to far the larger part of his writings! I have now an epitome of them all. I think the way in which you have done the 'Life' the most judicious you could have pitched upon. You have made him tell his own story, and your comments are in keeping with the tale. Why, I never heard of such a work as 'the Review.'[1] Strange that in my stall-hunting days I never so much as lit upon an odd volume of it. This circumstance looks as if they were never of any great circulation. But I may have met with 'em, and not knowing the prize, overpast 'em. I was almost a stranger to the whole history of Dissenters in those reigns, and picked my way through that strange book the 'Consolidator' at random. How affecting are some of his personal appeals! what a machine of projects he set on foot! and following writers have picked his pocket of the patents! I do not understand whereabouts in *Roxana* he himself left off. I always thought the complete-tourist-sort of description of the town she passes through on her last embarkation miserably unseasonable and out of place. I knew not they were spurious. Enlighten me as to where the apocryphal matter commences. I, by accident, can correct one A. D. 'Family Instructor,' vol. ii. 1718; you say his first volume had then reached the fourth edition; now I have a fifth,

[1] [The only copy approaching to completeness is that now in the British Museum, from the Crossley sale, but it is not perfect. The ninth and concluding volume is the rarest of this rare series.]

printed for Eman. Matthews, 1717. So have I plucked one rotten date, or rather picked it up where it had inadvertently fallen, from your flourishing date tree, the Palm of Engaddi. I may take it for my pains. I think yours a book which every public library must have, and every English scholar should have. I am sure it has enriched my meagre stock of the author's works. I seem to be twice as opulent. Mary is by my side just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. Colburn will be quite jealous. I was a little disappointed at my 'Ode to the Treadmill' not finding a place; but it came out of time. The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd that, never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval I should nearly have said the same things.[1] But I shall always feel happy in having my name go down any how with De Foe's and that of his historiographer. I promise myself, if not immortality, yet diuternity of being read in consequence. We have both had much illness this year; and feeling infirmities and fretfulness grow upon us, we have cast off the cares of housekeeping, sold off our goods, and commenced boarding and lodging with a very comfortable old couple next door to where you found us. We use a sort of common table. Nevertheless, we have reserved a private one for an old friend; and when Mrs. Wilson and you revisit Babylon, we shall pray you to make it yours for a season. Our very kindest remembrances to you both.

"From your old friend and *fellow-journalist*, now in *two instances*. "C. LAMB.

"Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of De Foe's Novels in 'the Edinbro'.'[2] I wish I had health and spirits to do it. Hone I have not seen, but I doubt not he will be much pleased with your performance. I very much hope you will give us an account of Dunton, &c. But what I should more like to see would be a Life and

[1] [Lamb wrote his earliest letter to Wilson on Defoe, so far as I can see, in 1822-3, and the later one in 1829—an interval of six or seven years only.]

[2] [Printed in the "Edinburgh Review" for 1830.]

Times of Bunyan. Wishing health to you and long life to your healthy book, again I subscribe me,

"Yours in verity,
"C. L."

Lamb desired to read Coleridge's copies of Fuller's "Church History" as well as his "Worthies," and Mr. Westwood, their landlord, drove Miss Lamb over to Highgate to take the letter, and bring back the book or books. What a sight for sore eyes it must have been!

TO MR. GILMAN.

[Late in November, 1829.]

"Pray trust me with the 'Church History,' as well as the 'Worthies.' A moon shall restore both. Also give me back Him of Aquinum. In return you have the *light of my countenance.*[1] Adieu.

"P.S. A sister also of mine comes with it. A son[2] of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedecish, hot, phaetontic. From my country lodgings at Enfield. "C. L."

A letter which, addressed to Mr. Gilman, was intended both for him and his great guest, shews that Mr. Westwood and his companion brought even more than what was required, and gives an account of the Westwoods, in which Devizes seems to be a fiction for Dunstable,[3] and exhibits a differing version of an anecdote of Thomas Westwood with the substitution of Devizes for the town name.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"30 Nov., 1829.

"Dear G.,—The excursionists reached home and the good town of Enfield a little after four, without slip or

[1] The etching by Mr. Brook Pulham.
[2] [Or rather a grandson. As we say, a Jehu.]
[3] [Compare the letter to Wordsworth of January 22nd, 1830.]

dislocation. Little has transpired concerning the events of the back-journey, save that on passing the house of 'Squire Mellish, situate a stone bow's cast from the hamlet, Father Westwood, with a good-natured wonderment, exclaimed, 'I cannot think what is gone of Mr. Mellish's rooks. I fancy they have taken flight somewhere; but I have missed them two or three years past.' All this while, according to his fellow-traveller's report, the rookery was darkening the air above with undiminished population, and deafening all ears but his with their cawings. But nature has been gently withdrawing such phenomena from the notice of Thomas Westwood's senses, from the time he began to miss the rooks. T. Westwood has passed a retired life in this hamlet of thirty or forty years, living upon the minimum which is consistent with gentility, yet a star among the minor gentry, receiving the bows of the trades-people and courtesies of the alms' women daily. Children venerate him not less for his external show of gentry, than they wonder at him for a gentle rising endorsation of the person, not amounting to a hump, or if a hump, innocuous as the hump of the buffalo, and coronative of as mild qualities. 'Tis a throne on which patience seems to sit—the proud perch of a self-respecting humility, stooping with condescension. Thereupon the cares of life have sate, and rid him easily. For he has thrid the *angustiæ domûs* with dexterity. Life opened upon him with comparative brilliancy. He set out as a rider or traveller for a wholesale house, in which capacity he tells of many hair-breadth escapes that befell him; one especially, how he rode a mad horse into the town of Devizes; how horse and rider arrived in a foam, to the utter consternation of the expostulating hostlers, inn-keepers, &c. It seems it was sultry weather, piping hot; the steed tormented into frenzy with gad-flies, long past being roadworthy; but safety and the interest of the house he rode for were incompatible things; a fall in serge cloth was expected; and a mad entrance they made of it. Whether the exploit was purely voluntary, or partially; or whether a certain personal defiguration in the man part of this extraordinary centaur (non-assistive to partition of natures) might not enforce the conjunction, I stand not to inquire. I look not with 'skew eyes into the

deeds of heroes. The hosier that was burnt with his shop in Field-lane, on Tuesday night, shall have past to heaven for me like a Marian Martyr, provided always, that he consecrated the fortuitous incremation with a short ejaculation in the exit, as much as if he had taken his state degrees of martyrdom *in formâ* in the market vicinage. There is adoptive as well as acquisitive sacrifice. Be the animus what it might, the fact is indisputable, that this composition was seen flying all abroad, and mine host of Daintry may yet remember its passing through his town, if his scores are not more faithful than his memory. After this exploit (enough for one man), Thomas Westwood seems to have subsided into a less hazardous occupation; and in the twenty-fifth year of his age we find him a haberdasher in Bow-lane: yet still retentive of his early riding (though leaving it to rawer stomachs), and Christmasly at night sithence to this last, and shall to his latest Christmas, hath he, doth he, and shall he, tell after supper the story of the insane steed and the desperate rider. Save for Bedlam or Luke's no eye could have guessed that melting day what house he rid for. But he reposes on his bridles, and after the ups and downs (metaphoric only) of a life behind the counter—hard riding sometimes, I fear, for poor T. W.—with the scrapings together of the shop, and *one anecdote*, he hath finally settled at Enfield; by hard economising, gardening, building for himself, hath reared a mansion, married a daughter, qualified a son for a counting-house, gotten the respect of high and low, served for self or substitute the greater parish offices: hath a special voice at vestries; and, domiciliating us, hath reflected a portion of his house-keeping respectability upon your humble servants. We are greater, being his lodgers, than when we were substantial renters. His name is a passport to take off the sneers of the native Enfielders against obnoxious foreigners. We are endenizened. Thus much of T. Westwood have I thought fit to acquaint you, that you may see the exemplary reliance upon Providence with which I entrusted so dear a charge as my own sister to the guidance of the man that rode the mad horse into Devizes. To come from his heroic character, all the amiable qualities of domestic life concentre in this tamed Bellerophon. He

is excellent over a glass of grog; just as pleasant without it; laughs when he hears a joke, and when (which is much oftener), he hears it not: sings glorious old sea songs on festival nights; and but upon a slight acquaintance of two years, Coleridge, is as dear a deaf old man to us, as old Norris, rest his soul! was after fifty. To him and his scanty literature (what there is of it, *sound*) have we flown from the metropolis and its cursed annualists, reviewers, authors, and the whole muddy ink press of that stagnant pool.

"Now, Gilman again, you do not know the treasure of the Fullers. I calculate on having massy reading till Christmas. All I want here, is books of the true sort, not those things in boards that moderns mistake for books—what they club for at book clubs.

"I did not mean to cheat you with a blank side; but my eye smarts, for which I am taking medicine, and abstain, this day at least, from any aliments but milk-porridge, the innocent taste of which I am anxious to renew after a half-century's disacquaintance. If a blot fall here like a tear, it is not pathos, but an angry eye.

"Farewell, while my *specilla* are sound.

"Yours and yours,
"C. Lamb."

The change which had been made at home brought improved health to Miss Lamb; to which Lamb refers in the following letter to his Suffolk friend, who had announced to him his appointment as assignee under a bankruptcy.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"December 8th, 1829.

"My dear B. B.,—You are very good to have been uneasy about us, and I have the satisfaction to tell you, that we are both in better health and spirits than we have been for a year or two past; I may say, than we have been since we have been at Enfield. The cause may not appear quite adequate, when I tell you, that a course of ill-health and spirits brought us to the determination of giving up

our house here; and we are boarding and lodging with a worthy old couple, long inhabitants of Enfield, where everything is done for us without our trouble, further than a reasonable weekly payment. We should have done so before; but it is not easy to flesh and blood to give up an ancient establishment, to discard old Penates, and from house-keepers to turn house-sharers. (N.B. We are not in the workhouse.) Diocletian, in his garden, found more repose than on the imperial seat of Rome; and the nob of Charles the Fifth ached seldomer under a monk's cowl than under the diadem. With such shadows of assimilation we countenance our degradation. With such a load of dignified cares just removed from our shoulders, we can the more understand and pity the accession to yours by the advancement to an assigneeship. I will tell you honestly, B. B., that it has been long my deliberate judgment that all bankrupts, of what denomination, civil or religious, soever, ought to be hanged. The pity of mankind has for ages run in a wrong channel, and has been diverted from poor creditors—(how many have I known sufferers! Hazlitt has just been defrauded of 100*l.* by his bookseller-friends breaking[1])—to scoundrel debtors. I know all the topics,—that distress may come upon an honest man without his fault; that the failure of one that he trusted was his calamity, &c. Then let *both* be hanged. O, how careful this would make traders! These are my deliberate thoughts, after many years' experience in matters of trade. What a world of trouble it would save you, if Friend ***** had been immediately hanged without benefit of clergy, which (being a Quaker) I presume he could not reasonably insist upon. Why, after slaving twelve months in your assign-business, you will be enabled to declare 7*d.* in the pound in all human probability. B. B., he should be *hanged*. Trade will never re-flourish in this land till such a law is established. I write big, not to save ink but eyes, mine having been troubled with reading through three folios of old Fuller in a most as few days; and I went to bed last night in agony, and am writing with a vial of eye-water before

[1] [Messrs. Hunt and Clarke, as aforesaid. It was a much larger sum, I believe—the payment for the "Life of Napoleon."]

me, alternately dipping in vial and inkstand. This may inflame my zeal against bankrupts; but it was my speculation when I could see better. Half the world's misery (Eden else) is owing to want of money, and all that want is owing to bankrupts. I declare I would, if the state wanted practitioners, turn hangman myself, and should have great pleasure in hanging the first bankrupt, after my salutary law should be established. I have seen no Annuals, and wish to see none. I like your fun upon them, and was quite pleased with Bowles's sonnet. Hood is, or was, at Brighton; but a note (prose or rhyme) to him, Robert-street, Adelphi, I am sure, would extract a copy of *his*, which also I have not seen. Wishing you and yours all health, I conclude, while these frail glasses are to me eyes.

"C. L."

Lamb has just told Barton, as we see, that three volumes of Fuller came to him from Coleridge, and that he had read them in "almost as few days." He probably restored them within the "moon;" but, not hearing, he naturally became anxious to have tidings of their safe arrival.[1]

TO MR. GILMAN.

[Enfield, about Christmas, 1829.]

"Dear Gilman,—Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the Winter has used you all.

"It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate; for beds we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full: tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gilman, &c.,

"Yours, mopish but in health, "C. LAMB.

"I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival."

[1] [Among Lamb's miscellaneous writings will be found some "Specimens from the Writings of Fuller the Church Historian," doubtless the fruit of this short loan from Coleridge.]

The following letter, written in the beginning of 1830, describes his landlord and landlady, and expresses with a fine solemnity the feelings which still held him at Enfield.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Jan. 22nd, 1830.

"And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom; autumn hath foregone its moralities,—they are 'heypass repass,' as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year, occurs back—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins, have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them, with the garden but to see it grow, with the tax-gatherer but to hear him knock, with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how—quietists, confiding ravens. We have the *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life not quite killed rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market; but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dullness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O! never let the lying poets be believed who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the

ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teazing image of a town about one: country folks that do not look like country folks: shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread, for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford-street: and for the immortal book and print stalls a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled—(marry, they just begin to be conscious of the *Redgauntlet*)—to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate, the topping gentry stock-brokers: the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping: too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet-street. Confining, room-keeping, thickest winter is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O! let no native Londoner imagine that health and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet and recreative study, can make the country anything better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison, till man with Promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London: haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; anything high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay

with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O, for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I do not flatter) is not a knob or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine-pin,—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a 'Recluse' out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker! Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu;* but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear that, though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past; she is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

"Our providers are an honest pair, Dame Westwood and her husband; he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself parcel-gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, 'I have married my daughter, however;' takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o' winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, (how comfortable to author-rid folks!) and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to balk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable[1] upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of inn-keepers, ostlers, &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the

[1] [In his letter to Gilman of 30th November, 1829, he writes *Devizes;* but the place here named was almost unquestionably the true one. Mr. Westwood was a sort of Gilpin the Second.]

beast to win the Derby. Understand the creature galled to death and desperation by gad-flies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus' daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a winter's eve; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant!*) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity; that the horse-part carried the reasoning willy-nilly; that needs must when such a devil drove; that certain spiral configurations in the frame of Thomas Westwood, unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let accident and him share the glory. You would all like Thomas Westwood. [ ][1] How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favoured in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses—still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple, sixty years ours and our father's friend? He was not more natural to us than this old Westwood, the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if we ever do move, we have incumbrances the less to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb[2] is at Rome; advices to that

[1] Here was a rude sketch of a gentleman answering to the description.

[2] [Robinson.]

effect have reached Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live or die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Christmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Hartz forest; his soul is be-Göethed. Miss Kelly we never see, Talfourd not this half year: the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, God forgive me, I have utterly forgotten; we single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? We see scarce anybody. Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularising. "C. L."

CHAPTER XVI.

LETTERS TO BARTON, GILMAN, AYRTON, SOUTHEY, NOVELLO, MRS. HAZLITT—LAMB'S ALBUM VERSES—DEATH OF HAZLITT.

[1830.]

HERE is a brief reply to the questioning of Lamb's true-hearted correspondent Barton, who doubted of the personal verity of Lamb's "Joseph Paice," the most polite of merchants. This friend's personal acquaintance with Lamb had not been frequent enough to teach him that, if Lamb could innocently "lie like truth," he made up for this freedom by sometimes making truth look like a lie. His account of Mr. Paice's politeness could at this time be attested to the letter by living witnesses.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"25th Feb., 1830.

"Dear B. B.,—To reply to you by return of post, I must gobble up my dinner, and despatch this *in propriâ personâ* to the office, to be in time. So take it from me hastily, that you are perfectly welcome to furnish Allan Cunningham with the scrap, which I had almost forgotten writing. The more my character comes to be known, the less my veracity will come to be suspected. Time every day clears up some suspected narrative of Herodotus, Bruce, and others of us great travellers. Why, that Joseph Paice was as real a person as Joseph Hume, and a great deal pleasanter. A careful observer of life, Bernard, has no need to invent. Nature romances it for him. Dinner plates rattle, and I positively shall incur indigestion by carrying it half concocted to the post-house. Let me congratulate you on the spring coming in, and do you in return condole with me on the winter going out. When the

old one goes, seldom comes a better. I dread the prospect of summer with his all-day-long days. No need of his assistance to make country places dull. With fire and candle-light I can dream myself in Holborn. With lightsome skies shining in to bed-time I cannot. This Mesheck and these tents of Kedar—I would dwell in the skirts of Jericho rather, and think every blast of the coming in mail a ram's horn. Give me old London at fire and plague times, rather than these tepid gales, healthy country air, and purposeless exercise.

"Leg of mutton absolutely on the table.

"Take our hasty loves and short farewell. "C. L."

The next letter to Coleridge's excellent host is a reply to a request from an importunate friend of his correspondent, that he would write something on behalf of the Spitalfields' weavers. Alien as such a task would have been to his habits of thought or composition, if Lamb had been acquainted with that singular race, living in their high, narrow, over-peopled houses in the thickest part of London, yet almost apart from the great throng of its dwellers: indulging their straitened sympathies in the fostering of the more tender animals, as rabbits and pigeons nurtured in their garrets or cellars, or cultivating some stunted plants with an intuitive love of nature, unfed by any knowledge of verdure beyond Hoxton—their painful industry, their uneducated morals, their eager snatches of pleasure from the only quickening of their intellect, by liquors which make glad the heart of man—he would scarcely have refused the offered retainer for them.

TO MR. GILMAN.

"March 8th, 1830.

"My dear G.,—Your friend Battin (for I knew him immediately by the smooth satinity of his style) must excuse me for advocating the cause of his friends in Spitalfields. The fact is, I am retained by the Norwich people, and have already appeared in their paper under the signatures of 'Lucius Sergius,' 'Bluff,' 'Broad-Cloth,' 'No-Trade-to-the-Woollen-Trade,' 'Anti-plush,' &c., in defence

of druggets and long camblets. And without this pre-engagement, I feel I should naturally have chosen a side opposite to ———, for in the silken seemingness of his nature there is that which offends me. My flesh tingles at such caterpillars. He shall not crawl me over. Let him and his workmen sing the old burthen,

'Heigh ho, ye weavers!'

for any aid I shall offer them in this emergency. I was over Saint Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm raving nights. The right-hand truckle in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood, for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon [Armigeddon], who I suppose is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favourite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations; marry, to the same in Greek you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet.[1] Conceive the two Rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to affect a humbler posture! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality—Latmos, I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings; her affection will be ever at

[1] [A jocular allusion to the contingency of Coleridge joining Irving at St. Luke's.]

the full. Well; keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places. "C. L."

In the spring of the year, Mr. Murray, the publisher, through one of Lamb's oldest and most cherished friends, Mr. Ayrton, proposed that he should undertake a continuation of his Specimens of the Old English Dramatists. The proposal was communicated by Mr. Ayrton to Lamb, then at Enfield, and then too painfully anxious for the recovery of Miss Isola, who was dangerously ill in Suffolk, to make the arrangement desired. The following is the reply:—

TO MR. AYRTON.

"Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield.
"14th March, 1830.

"My dear Ayrton,—Your letter, which was only not so pleasant as your appearance would have been, has revived some old images; Phillips,[1] (not the Colonel), with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke, which he declares impossible; the old Captain's[2] significant nod over the right shoulder (was it not?); Mrs. Battle's determined questioning of the score, after the game was absolutely gone to the devil, the plain but hospitable cold boiled-beef suppers at sideboard; all which fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful spirits, come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.

[1] Edward Phillips, Esq., Secretary to the Right Hon. Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. The "Colonel" alluded to was the Lieutenant of Marines who accompanied Capt. Cook in his last voyage, and on shore with that great man when he fell a victim to his humanity. On the death of his commander, Lieutenant Phillips, himself wounded, swam off to the boats; but seeing one of his marines struggling in the water to escape the natives who were pursuing him, gallantly swam back, protected his man at the peril of his own life, and both reached their boat in safety. He afterwards married that accomplished and amiable daughter of Dr. Burney, whose name so frequently occurs in the Diary and Correspondence of her sister, Madame D'Arblay.

[2] Captain (afterwards Admiral) James Burney.

"You imagine a deep gulf between you and us; and there is a pitiable hiatus in *kind* between St. James's Park and this extremity of Middlesex. But the mere distance in turnpike roads is a trifle. The roof of a coach swings you down in an hour or two. We have a sure hot joint on a Sunday, and when had we better? I suppose you know that ill health has obliged us to give up housekeeping; but we have an asylum at the very next door—only twenty-four inches further from town, which is not material in a country expedition—where a *table d'hôte* is kept for us, without trouble on our parts, and we adjourn after dinner, when one of the old world (old friends) drops casually down among us. Come and find us out, and seal our judicious change with your approbation, whenever the whim bites, or the sun prompts. No need of announcement, for we are sure to be at home.

"I keep putting off the subject of my answer. In truth I am not in spirits at present to see Mr. Murray on such a business; but pray offer him my acknowledgments and an assurance that I should like at least one of his propositions, as I have so much additional matter for the SPECIMENS, as might make two volumes in all, or ONE (new edition) omitting such better known authors as Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, &c.

"But we are both in trouble at present. A very dear young friend of ours, who passed her Christmas holidays here, has been taken dangerously ill with a fever, from which she is very precariously recovering, and I expect a summons to fetch her when she is well enough to bear the journey from Bury. It is Emma Isola, with whom we got acquainted at our first visit to your sister at Cambridge, and she has been an occasional inmate with us—and of late years much more frequently—ever since. While she is in this danger, and till she is out of it, and here in a probable way to recovery, I feel that I have no spirits for an engagement of any kind. It has been a terrible shock to us; therefore I beg that you will make my handsomest excuses to Mr. Murray.

"Our very kindest loves to Mrs. A. and the younger A.'s. "Your unforgotten,

"C. LAMB."

Miss Isola had gone on a visit for a month to Mr. and Mrs. Williams, of Fornham, near Bury St. Edmunds, and was seized during her stay by an attack of brain fever. Lamb writes to an old friend to put off a call upon her on this account, and adds what news he has.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

[March 4th, 1830.]

"Dear Sarah,—I was meditating to come & see you, but I am unable for the walk. We are both very unwell, and under affliction for poor Emma, who has had a very dangerous brain fever, and is lying very ill at Bury, from whence I expect a summons to fetch her. We are very sorry for your confinement. Any books I have are at your service. I am almost, I may say *quite* sure, that letters to India pay no postage, & may go by the regular Post Office, now in St. Martin's le Grand. I think any receiving house would take them—

"I wish I could confirm your hopes about Dick Norris.[1] But it is quite a dream. Some old Bencher of his surname is made *Treasurer* for the year, I suppose, which is an annual office. Norris was Sub-Treasurer, quite a different thing. They were pretty well in the Summer, since when we have heard nothing of them. Mrs. Reynolds is better than she has been for years; she is with a disagreeable woman that she has taken a mighty fancy to out of spite to a rival woman she used to live and quarrel with; she grows quite *fat*, they tell me, & may live as long as I do, to be a tormenting rentcharge to my diminish'd income. We go on pretty comfortably in our new plan. I will come & have a talk with you when poor Emma's affair is settled, & will bring books. At present I am weak, & could hardly bring my legs home yesterday after a much shorter stroll than to Northaw. Mary has got her bonnet on for a short expedition. May you get better, as the Spring comes on. She sends her best love with mine. "C. L."

[Endorsed:]

"Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Tomlinson's, Northaw,
"Near Potter's Bar, Herts or Middlesex."

[1] That Mr. Richard Norris, the son of Lamb's old friend, had been appointed to his father's berth.

At the end of March, 1830, Miss Isola had recovered from her illness sufficiently to be moved, and Lamb went down to Bury to fetch her home. It was on his return that the repartee to the query of the statistical gentleman as to the prospects of the turnip crop, which has been repeatedly published, was made. The following is his own version of it, contained in a letter addressed to Miss Isola's hostess :—

TO MRS. WILLIAMS.

"Enfield, April 2nd, 1830.

"Dear Madam,—I have great pleasure in letting you know Miss Isola has suffered very little from fatigue on her long journey. I am ashamed to say that I came home rather the more tired of the two; but I am a very unpractised traveller. We found my sister very well in health, only a little impatient to see her; and, after a few hysterical tears for gladness, all was comfortable again. We arrived here from Epping between five and six. The accidents of our journey were trifling; but you bade us tell them. We had then in the coach a rather talkative gentleman, but very civil, all the way, and took up a servant maid at Stanford going to a sick mistress. To the latter a participation in the hospitalities of your nice rusks and sandwiches proved agreeable, as it did to my companion, who took merely a sip of the weakest wine and water with them. The former engaged in a discourse for full twenty miles, on the probable advantages of steam carriages, which, being merely problematical, I bore my part in with some credit, in spite of my totally un-engineer-like faculties. But when, somewhere about Stanstead, he put an unfortunate question to me, as to the 'probability of its turning out a good turnip season,' and when I, who am still less of an agriculturist than a steam philosopher, not knowing a turnip from a potato ground, innocently made answer, that 'I believed it depended very much upon boiled legs of mutton,' my unlucky reply set Miss Isola a laughing to a degree that disturbed her tranquillity for the only moment in our journey. I am afraid my credit sank very low with my other fellow-traveller, who had thought he had met with

a well-informed passenger, which is an accident so desirable in a stage-coach. We were rather less communicative, but still friendly, the rest of the way.

"How I employed myself between Epping and Enfield, the poor verses in the front of my paper may inform you, which you may please to christen an Acrostic in a Cross Road, and which I wish were worthier of the lady they refer to; but I trust you will plead my pardon to her on a subject so delicate as a lady's good *name*. Your candour must acknowledge that they are written straight. And now, dear Madam, I have left myself hardly space to express my sense of the friendly reception I found at Fornham. Mr. Williams will tell you that we had the pleasure of a slight meeting with him on the road, where I could almost have told him, but that it seemed ungracious, that such had been your hospitality, that I scarcely missed the good master of the family at Fornham, though heartily I should have rejoiced to have made a little longer acquaintance with him. I will say nothing of our deeper obligations to both of you, because I think that we agreed at Fornham that gratitude may be over-exacted on the part of the obliging, and over-expressed on the part of the obliged, person.

"My sister and Miss Isola join in respects to Mr. Williams and yourself. Miss Isola will have the pleasure of writing to you next week, and we shall hope at your leisure to hear of your own health, &c.

"I am, dear Madam, with great respect, your obliged,

"CHARLES LAMB."

To the same lady, having sent him an acrostic on his sister's name, he replied with a letter which contained one on hers and the following notice of his own talent in the acrostic line.

"Enfield, Good Friday, 1830.

"Dear Madam,—I do assure you that your verses gratified me very much, and my sister is quite *proud* of them. For the first time in my life I congratulated myself upon the shortness and meanness of my name. Had it been Schwartzenberg or Esterhazy, it would have put you to some puzzle. I am afraid I shall sicken you of acrostics; but this last was

written *to order*. I beg you to have inserted in your county paper something like this advertisement. 'To the nobility, gentry, and others, about Bury.—C. Lamb respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he is leaving off business in the acrostic line, as he is going into an entirely new line. Rebuses and charades done as usual, and upon the old terms. Also, epitaphs to suit the memory of any person deceased.'

"I thought I had adroitly escaped the rather unpliable name of 'Williams,' curtailing your poor daughters to their proper surnames; but it seems you would not let me off so easily. If these trifles amuse you, I am paid. Though really 'tis an operation too much like—'A, apple-pie; B, bit it.' To make amends, I request leave to lend you the 'Excursion,' and to recommend, in particular, the 'Churchyard Stories,' in the seventh book, I think. They will strengthen the tone of your mind after its weak diet on acrostics.

"Miss Isola is writing, and will tell you that we are going on very comfortably. Her sister is just come. She blames my last verses, as being more written on Mr. Williams than on yourself; but how should I have parted whom a Superior Power has brought together? I beg you will jointly accept of all our best respects, and pardon your obsequious if not troublesome correspondent, "C. L.

"P.S.—I am the worst folder-up of a letter in the world, except certain Hottentots, in the land of Caffre, who never fold up their letters at all, writing very badly upon skins, &c."

Lamb's kindness to Hone was not confined to his contributions to the "Every-day Book" and the "Table Book." Those pleasant and blameless works had failed to supply an adequate income for a numerous family, and Lamb was desirous of interesting his influential friends in a new project of Hone's, to establish himself in a coffee-house conducted in a superior style. With this view, he wrote to Southey who, nobly forgetting Hone's old heresies in politics or parodies, had made a genial reference to his late work in his "Life of Bunyan."

TO MR. SOUTHEY.

"May 10th, 1830.

"Dear Southey,—My friend Hone, whom you would like *for a friend*, I found deeply impressed with your generous notice of him in your beautiful 'Life of Bunyan,' which I am just now full of. He has written to you for leave to publish a certain good-natured letter. I write not this to enforce his request, for we are fully aware that the refusal of such publication would be quite consistent with all that is good in your character. Neither he nor I expect it from you, nor exact it; but if you would consent to it, you would have me obliged by it, as well as him. He is just now in a critical situation: kind friends have opened a coffee-house for him in the City, but their means have not extended to the purchase of coffee-pots, credit for Reviews, newspapers, and other paraphernalia. So I am sitting in the skeleton of a possible divan. What right I have to interfere, you best know. Look on me as a dog who went once temporarily insane, and bit you, and now begs for a crust. Will you set your wits to a dog?

"Our object is to open a subscription, which my friends of the 'Times' are most willing to forward for him, but think that a leave from you to publish would aid it.

"But not an atom of respect or kindness will or shall it abate in either of us, if you decline it. Have this strongly in your mind.

"Those 'Every-day' and 'Table' Books will be a treasure a hundred years hence; but they have failed to make Hone's fortune.

"Here his wife and all his children are about me, gaping for coffee customers; but how should they come in, seeing no pot boiling!

"Enough of Hone. I saw Coleridge a day or two since. He has had some severe attack, not paralytic; but, if I had not heard of it, I should not have found it out. He looks, and especially speaks, strong. How are all the Wordsworths, and all the Southeys? whom I am obliged to you if you have not brought up haters of the name of

"C. LAMB.

"P.S.—I have gone lately into the acrostic line. I find genius (such as I had) declines with me; but I get clever. Do you know anybody that wants charades, or such things, for Albums? I do 'em at so much a sheet. Perhaps an epigram (not a very happy-gram) [1] I did for a school-boy yesterday may amuse. I pray Jove he may not get a flogging for any false quantity; but 'tis, with one exception, the only Latin verses I have made for forty years, and I did it 'to order.'

"SUUM CUIQUE.[2]

"Adsciscit sibi divitias et opes alienas
Fur, rapiens, spolians, quod mihi, quod-que tibi,
Proprium erat, temnens hæc verba, Meum-que, Suum-que
Omne suum est: tandem Cui-que Suum tribuit.
Dat laqueo collum; vestes, vah! carnifici dat;
Sese Diabolo: sic bene: Cuique Suum.

"I write from Hone's, therefore Mary cannot send her love to Mrs. Southey, but I do.

"Yours ever, "C. L."

The esteem, which Lamb had always cherished for Mr. Rogers, was quickened into a livelier feeling by the generous interest which the poet took in the success of

[1] [In a letter to Godwin of November 10th, 1803, Lamb refers to the verses he had occasionally made at that early date for Merchant Taylors' boys—"at a guinea a copy," says he; but that is a joke probably—so that it was hardly a new line In the "Taylorian" for March, 1884, my old schoolmaster, Archdeacon Hessey, explains that this epigram was made for him, when he paid a visit with his father, the publisher, to Enfield. "I told him," says the Archdeacon, "that I had devoured his 'Roast Pig,' and he congratulated me on possessing a thorough schoolboy's appetite. And he was pleased when I mentioned my having seen the boys at Christ's Hospital at their public suppers, which then took place on the Sunday evenings in Lent. 'Could this good-natured and humorous old gentleman be prevailed upon to give me an Epigram?' 'I don't know,' said my father, when I put the question, 'but I will ask him at any rate, and send him the mottoes.' In a day or two there arrived from Enfield . . . not one, but two epigrams, one on each subject . . ."]

[2] [As Archdeacon Hessey points out, this motto and its epigram were suggested by the "grim satisfaction which had recently been expressed by the public at the capture and execution of several notorious highwaymen."]

Mr. Moxon, who was starting as a publisher. The following little note shows the state of his feelings at this time towards two distinguished persons.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Enfield, Tuesday, May 12, 1830.

"Dear M.,—I dined with your and my Rogers at Mr. Cary's yesterday. Cary consulted me on the proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to.[1] I said I would write to *you*. But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behaviour to you, and you are already no stranger. Go! I made Rogers laugh about your Nightingale Sonnet, not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly.

"C. L."

We return for a while to the Novellos.

TO VINCENT NOVELLO.

"Friday [May 14, 1830].

"Dear Novello,—Mary hopes you have not forgot you are to spend a day with us on Wednesday. That it may be a long one, cannot you secure places now for Mrs. Novello, yourself, and the Clarkes? We have just table-

[1] [Lamb was a general mark for all would-be vendors of improbable MSS. within his radius. What this particular one was does not appear; but for some length of time a little before this period he had on inspection and sale a novel by Miss Mary Hazlitt. He did not succeed in finding a publisher for it, and eventually, as we shall see, returned it to the writer. Mary Hazlitt, second daughter of John Hazlitt the painter, died a few years ago unmarried. As early as the 10th August, 1825, Lamb says to Hone:—"Will you direct these from Miss Hazlitt to Mr. Thelwall, whose address I know not?" And in another to the same, undated, occurs:—"Miss Hazlitt is anxious about her MS. novel. Would you be so kind as to transmit it some way or other to Mr. Hardy, 30, Queen's Row or Queen's Square, Pimlico, if he has not already got it?" This reference in each case seems to be to the same literary production.]

room for four. Five make my good landlady fidgetty; six, to begin to fret; seven, to approximate to fever-point. But, seriously, we shall prefer four to two or three. We shall have from half-past ten to six, when the coach goes off, to scent the country. And pray write *now*, to say you do so come, for dear Mrs. Westwood else will be on the tenters of incertitude. "C. LAMB.

"Vincent Novello, Esq.,
"66, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields."

Apparently the Novellos had left at Enfield, when they went there to spend the day, an album, which Lamb sent back by the carrier. In the succeeding note, and in that which shortly follows to Hone, he expresses his anxiety to know whether it has been received.

TO THE SAME.

[Between May 14 and 21, 1830.]

"Dear N.,—Pray write immediately, to say, 'The book has come safe.' I am curious not so much for the autographs as for that bit of the hair-brush. I inclose a cinder, which belonged to Shield[1] when he was poor, and lit his own fires. Any memorial of a great musical genius, I know, is acceptable; and Shield has his merits, though Clementi, in my opinion, is far above him in the *sostenuto*.

"Mr. Westwood desires his compliments, and begs to present you with a nail that came out of Jomelli's coffin, who is buried at Naples.

"REJECTED EPIGRAMS.

"On English ground I calculated once
How many blockheads—taking dunce by dunce:
There are *four hundred* (if I don't forget)—
The readers of the 'Literary Gazette.'"

[No signature.]

[1] [William Shield the composer. I have a curious unpublished letter from him to Bloomfield the poet, dated 1811, in which he tenders the author of the "Farmer's Boy" a flattering estimate of that performance in requital of a complimentary opinion expressed as to his own musical abilities.]

Southey replied to Lamb's letter of the 10th on the 20th May, speaking very kindly and appreciatively of Hone, and according the solicited permission; and Lamb, wishing his poor friend to see exactly what Southey had said, forwarded him the letter, at the same time begging him to institute an inquiry at Novello's as to the album, of which no intelligence was yet forthcoming. The editor of the "Every-day Book" had written personally to thank the editor of Bunyan for his good offices.

The correspondence between Hone and Southey appeared in the "Times" of May 21, 1830, with an advertisement in respect to the subscriptions on foot for the relief of the family; and the two following notes chiefly relate to this business:—

TO WILLIAM HONE.

[May 21, 1830.]

"Dear Hone,—I thought you would be pleased to see this letter. Pray, if you have time, call on Novello, No. 66 Great Queen Street. I am anxious to learn whether he received his album, which I sent on Friday by our nine-o'clock morning stage. If not, beg him to inquire at the Old Bell, Holborn. "CHARLES LAMB.

"Southey will see in the 'Times' all we proposed omitting is omitted."

The next is post-marked May 22; but it was addressed to the same correspondent on the same day. Lamb proposed apparently to pay his subscription through Mr. Moxhay?[1] The Paper mentioned must have been the copy of the "Times" above described, and "It" the correspondence, &c.:—

[1] [An acquaintance of Lamb and of Hazlitt, and an eccentric but worthy character who, having (as I have heard from my father) come up from Exeter, where he was a cobbler and a pugilist, set up a baker's shop, and afterwards an eating-house in Threadneedle Street, and having accumulated money, built the block of buildings at the corner of Old Broad Street. He had a fine house and grounds at Stamford Hill, where he built an enormous organ at a great cost. Moxhay, whose acquaintance with Lamb and Hazlitt probably brought him into contact with Hone, professed admiration for the writings of my grandfather and "Elia," and after Hazlitt's death showed much kindness to his son.]

TO THE SAME.

[May 21, 1830.]

"Thanks for the Paper. It is irreprehensibly and capitally drawn up. Much better an entire Letter (*exceptis excipiendis*) than Extracts. Put me down per Moxhay.

"C. L."

[Indorsed:]

"Mr. Hone,
"13, Gracechurch Street."

The Lambs certainly felt a hearty interest in Hone and his family. In 1827 his daughter Matilda had been taken ill; and in a letter of August 10th that year Lamb writes, "We are both exceedingly grieved at dear Matilda's illness, whom we have ever regarded with the greatest respect. Pray God your next news, which we shall expect most anxiously, shall give hopes of her recovery." The young lady did recover, and attended to the coffee-shop, and sent Lamb his newspapers. There is a sort of letter of the 17th June, 1830, empowering her to put into the two-penny post the "Times" of the day before, and engaging to pay "William Hone, Coffee and Hotel Man," for the same quarterly. The communication winds up with "Vivant Coffee Coffee-pot-que," and is addressed to "Mr. Hone, Coffee-house and Hotel, 13, Gracechurch Street, London." It was known as the Grasshopper Hotel.

The following contains Lamb's account of the late journey to Bury St. Edmunds, addressed to Buxton, whither Mrs. Hazlitt was in the occasional habit of going for the treatment of her rheumatism:—

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

"Enfield, Saturday, May 24th, 1830.

"Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb quite well.

"Dear Sarah,—I found my way to Northaw on Thursday and a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady, but that the woman

who was with you was naught. These things may be so or not. I did not accept her offered glass of wine (home-made, I take it) but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold Lamb from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhampstead, &c.; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis. I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came, and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

"Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and said, 'Now, pray, don't *drink;* do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield, you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it.' How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have 'no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence.' Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield.[1] We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage-coach, that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: 'What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?' Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that 'it depended, I believed, upon boiled legs of mutton.'

[1] [Compare the letter to Mrs. Williams herself of April 2, 1830.]

This clench'd our conversation, and my Gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey. Ayrton was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit and a devilish pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom! He talk'd on Music; & by having read Hawkins & Burney recently I was enabled to talk of Names, and show more knowledge than he had suspected I possessed; and in the end he begg'd me to shape my thoughts upon paper, which I did after he was gone, & sent him

"FREE THOUGHTS ON SOME EMINENT COMPOSERS.

"Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites. For my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.
Cannot a man live free and easy,
Without admiring Pergolesi!
Or thro' the world with comfort go,
That never heard of Doctor Blow!
So help me God, I hardly have;
And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,
Like other people, (if you watch it,)
And know no more of stave & crotchet
Than did the un-Spaniardised Peruvians;
Or those old ante-queer-Diluvians
That lived in the unwash'd world with Jubal,
Before that dirty Blacksmith Tubal
By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
Found out, to his great surprise, the gamut.
I care no more for Cimerosa
Than he did for Salvator Rosa,
Being no Painter; and bad luck
Be mine, if I can bear that Gluck!
Old Tycho Brahe and modern Herschel
Had something in 'em; but who's Purcel?
The devil, with his foot so cloven,
For ought I care, may take Beethoven;
And, if the bargain does not suit,
I'll throw him Weber in to boot.
There's not the splitting of a splinter
To chuse 'twixt *him last named* and Winter.
Of Doctor Pepusch old queen Dido
Knew just as much, God knows, as I do.
I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach—or Batch—which is it?
No more I would for Bononcini.
As for Novello and Rossini,
I will not say a word about[1] 'em,
Because they are living. So I leave 'em.[2]

Martin Burney[3] is as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word 'heir,' which I contended was pronounced

[1] [So in the orig.]
[2] [Below this is *a corkscrew*, and one of Lamb's favourite flourishes.]
[3] Burney had just been called to the bar.

like 'air;' he said that might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the 'Heir-at-Law,' a comedy; but that in the Law Courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *Hayer;* he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a Counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he 'would consult Serjeant Wilde,' who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water, sometimes into the fire. He came down here, & insisted on reading Virgil's 'Eneid' all thro' with me (which he did), because a Counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because Biblical quotations are very emphatic in a Court of Justice. A third time, he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favordly, because 'we did not know how indispensable it was for a Barrister to do all those sort of things well? Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed.' So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, & losing it. With a long head, but somewhat a wrong one—harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one—may be, he has tired him out.

"I am —— with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile, you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire, & tell the devil I humbly kiss—my hand to him. Yours ever, "C. LAMB."

Mrs. Hazlitt, naturally solicitous as to her son's future, as he was nineteen, and had no profession, had asked, first, Martin Burney, who excused himself from interfering, and then Lamb to submit a suggestion from her to his father, namely, that the boy should be placed with Mr. Braham the singer, with a view to being brought up in that line—a very sensible idea, as he had a voice which, with proper cultivation, would have enabled him to pursue such a vocation with success.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

[June 3, 1830.]

"Dear Sarah,—I named your thought about William to his father, who exprest such horror and aversion to the

idea of his singing in public, that I cannot meddle in it directly or indirectly. Ayrton is a kind fellow, and if you chuse to consult him by Letter, or otherwise, he will give you the best advice, I am sure, very readily. *I have no doubt that M. Burney's objection to interfering was the same with mine.* With thanks for your pleasant long letter, which is not that of an Invalid, and sympathy for your sad sufferings, I remain, in haste,

"Yours Truly.

[No signature.]

"Mary's kindest Love."

[Indorsed:]
"Mrs. Hazlitt, at Mr. Broomhead's,
"St. Anne's Square, Buxton."

In 1830, a small volume of poems, the gleanings of some years, during which Lamb had devoted himself to prose under his name of "Elia," was published by Mr. Moxon, with the title of "Album Verses," and with a dedication by Lamb, in token of his strong regard, to the Publisher. An unfavourable review of them in the "Literary Gazette" produced some verses from Southey, which were inserted in the "Times," and of which the following, as evincing his unchanged friendship, may not unfitly be inserted here. The residue, being more severe on Lamb's critics than Lamb himself would have wished, may now be spared.

"Charles Lamb, to those who know thee justly dear
For rarest genius and for sterling worth,
Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,
And wit that never gave an ill thought birth,
Nor ever in its sport infix'd a sting;
To us who have admired and loved thee long,
It is a proud as well as pleasant thing
To hear thy good report, now borne along
Upon the honest breath of public praise:
We know that with the elder sons of song,
In honouring whom thou hast delighted still,
Thy name shall keep its course to after days."

This year closed upon the grave of Hazlitt. Lamb visited him frequently during his last illness, and attended his funeral.[1] They had taken great delight in each other's

[1] [See Clarke's "Recollections," 1878, p. 63.]

conversation for many years; and though the indifference of Lamb to the objects of Hazlitt's passionate love or hatred as a politician, at one time produced a coolness, the warmth of the defence of Hazlitt in Elia's Letter to Southey renewed the old regard of the philosopher, and set all to rights. Hazlitt, in his turn, as an Edinburgh Reviewer had opportunities which he delighted to use, of alluding to Lamb's Specimens and Essays, and making him amends for the severity of ancient criticism, which the editor, who could well afford the genial inconsistency, was too generous to exclude. The conduct, indeed, of that distinguished person [1] to Hazlitt, especially in his last illness, won Lamb's admiration, and wholly effaced the recollection of the time when, thirty years before, his play had been denied critical mercy under his rule. Hazlitt's death did not so much shock Lamb at the time, as it weighed down his spirits afterwards, when he felt the want of those essays which he had used periodically to look for with eagerness in the magazines and reviews which they alone made tolerable to him; and when he realized the dismal certainty that he should never again enjoy that rich discourse of old poets and painters with which so many a long winter's night had been gladdened, or taste life with an additional relish in the keen sense of enjoyment which endeared it to his companion.

[Amid all the distinguished throng of acquaintances and correspondents which Lamb gathered round him, four men had hitherto stood conspicuous—Coleridge, Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Manning; and now the loss of the author of "Table Talk," made the first breach in the circle, was apt to be felt as the first wrench. For, of Coleridge, Lamb owned that he never looked to see his like again; and of Hazlitt, in his letter to Southey in 1823, he wrote: "I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion." In Lamb's infirm state of health, with his delicate nervous organization, and with his reluctance to move from home, his journeys from Edmonton to his old friend's bedside, in days of more difficult travel than these, were no slight matter. No one, save

[1] [Jeffrey.]

Norris of the Temple, had ever received such homage before at his hands, and no one, not even Coleridge, received it again.

Among the MSS. in the British Museum[1] is a tragedy called "The Dissolution of the Roman Republic," by John Patteshull, which in the catalogue is absurdly reputed to be a pseudonym for Charles Lamb. The production is dated 1830; but it is excessively unlikely that Lamb should have written on such a subject, or on any in the dramatic way, at this late period of his life; and the simple fact is that it is a play sent to him for inspection and criticism, with a list of comments in his hand at the end.]

[1] [Add. MSS. 25925.]

CHAPTER XVII.

ACCESSION OF WILLIAM IV.—LETTERS TO BARTON, NOVELLO, DYER, TAYLOR, CARY, AND MOXON—THE "ENGLISHMAN'S MAGAZINE."

[1830-1.]

THE next letter, addressed to Barton, refers to the "Album Verses" of which Barton had apparently expressed surprise at not receiving a copy, to the commencement of a new reign, and to the late expedition to Bury. When it was written, either Barton himself or his family were probably from home, as Lamb professes not to know the address of Anne Knight and Lucy.

TO BERNARD BARTON.[1]

"June 28, 1830.

"Dear B. B.,—Could you dream of my publishing without sending a copy to you? You will find something new to you in the volume, particularly the translations. Moxon will send to you the moment it is out. He is the young poet of Christmas, whom the Author of the 'Pleasures of Memory' has set up in the book-vending business with a volunteer'd loan of £500. Such munificence is rare to an almost stranger; but Rogers, I am told, has done many good-natured things of this kind.

"I need not say how glad to see A. K. and Lucy we should have been,—and still shall be, if it be practicable. Our direction is Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side, Enfield; but alas! I know not theirs. We can give them a bed. Coaches come daily from the Bell, Holborn.

"You will see that I am worn to the poetical dregs, condescending to acrostics, which are nine fathom beneath

[1] [This, like the letter of May 15, 1824, to Barton, was accidentally omitted by Talfourd, and is reprinted from the original.]

album verses; but they were written at the request of the lady [1] where our Emma is, to whom I paid a visit in April to bring home Emma for a change of air after a severe illness, in which she had been treated like a daughter by the good Parson and his whole family. She has since returned to her occupation. I thought on you in Suffolk, but was forty miles from Woodbridge. I heard of you the other day from Mr. Pulham of the India House.

"Long live King William the IVth. !

"S. T. C. says we have had wicked kings, foolish kings, wise kings (but few,) but never till now have we had a blackguard king.

"Charles the Second was profligate, but a gentleman.

"I have nineteen letters to dispatch this leisure Sabbath for Moxon to send with copies; so you will forgive me short measure, and believe me,

"Yours ever, "C. L.

"Pray do let us see your Quakeresses, if possible."

Occasional allusions to the Martins are scattered through the correspondence; but no vestige of any letters to that family beyond the subjoined lines to Monkey Louisa have apparently survived. Lamb must have entertained a genuine regard for them, and have done what he could to render their circumstances more comfortable. We have already heard of the Dowden business in a letter to Procter of January 19, 1829. Mrs. Dowden was the married daughter of John Lamb's wife by her first husband, and was only Lamb's niece by marriage.

TO LOUISA MARTIN.

[July 11, 1830.]

"Dear Monkey,—I am engaged all over with Mrs. Dowden my Niece, who has come from Brighton on business very pressing to her, and the time she leaves me for my own is not enough for another business which I have on hand. I have been, moreover, very unwell indeed, & tho'

[1] [Mrs. Williams.]

recovering, have little spirits for going about—am a sick cat that loves to be alone on housetops or at cellar bottoms—but not many days shall pass over, before I find you all out. You cannot think the pleasure I had in the sight of all your names. Love to all, Natives & Yankies. Capt. Thomas's Farmé Ornée upon Haverstock Hill drawn from memory.

"[Sketch of the farm. A cow her tail. These are trees. Foreground.]

"The chimney is without smoke, it being cold-bone day. The door I omit, so treacherous is memory.

"Believe me Yours (all) as ever,

"C. L."

[Endorsed:]

"Miss Louisa Martin,
"13, Green's Row,
"Chelsea College."

The petty criticisms on the "Album Verses," by which a genial trifle, intended to mark the commencement of the career of a dear friend, was subjected to absurd severity, provoked the following from Lamb to his Quaker correspondent.

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"August 30th, 1830.

"Dear B. B.,—My address is 34, Southampton Buildings, Holborn. For God's sake do not let me be pestered with Annuals.[1] They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who write in them. I am still alone, and very much out of sorts, and cannot spur up my mind to writing. The sight of one of those year books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy.

"Thank you for your warm interest about my little volume, for the critics on which I care the five hundred thousandth part of the tythe of a half-farthing. I am too

[1] [Perhaps this referred to some proposal that Lamb should contribute to a new one edited by Alexander Whitelaw, called the "Casquet of Literary Gems," 1831, small 8vo., two volumes or series. In fact, he did so in common with Southey, Scott, and others.]

old a Militant for that. How noble, tho', in R. S.,[1] to come forward for an old friend, who had treated him so unworthily.—

"Moxon has a shop without customers, I a book without readers. But what a clamour against a poor collection of Album verses, as if we had put forth an Epic. I cannot scribble a long letter—I am, when not at foot, very desolate, and take no interest in anything, scarce hate anything—but Annuals. I am in an interregnum of thought and feeling. What a beautiful autumn morning this is, if it was but with me as in times past, when the candle of the Lord shined round me. I cannot even muster enthusiasm to admire the French heroism. In better times I hope we may some day meet, and discuss an old poem or two. But if you'd have me not sick, no more of Annuals.

"C. L., Ex-Elia.

"Love to Lucy and A. K. always."

At Novello's request, Lamb wrote the verses given below as an epitaph on the monument of six children, the four sons and two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Biggs, of York, who were drowned in the Ouse in August, 1830. But they were not used owing to the interference of some local authority. This is the last note to Novello.

TO VINCENT NOVELLO.

"Nov. 8, 1830.

"Tears are for lighter griefs. Man weeps the doom
That seals a single victim to the tomb.
But when Death riots, when with whelming sway
Destruction sweeps a family away;
When Infancy and Youth, a huddled mass,
All in an instant to oblivion pass,
And Parent hopes are crush'd: what lamentation
Can reach the depth of such a desolation?
Look upward, Feeble Ones! look up, and trust,
That He, who lays this mortal frame in dust,
Still hath the immortal Spirit in His keeping.
In Jesus' sight they are not dead, but sleeping.

[1] Robert Southey.

"Dear N., will these lines do? I despair of better. Poor Mary is in a deplorable state here at Enfield.

"Love to all,

"C. LAMB."

A rural conflagration at this time kindled the noblest range of Lamb's thoughts, which he expressed in the following letter. The light he flashes on the strange power exerted by the half-witted incendiary shows in it something of a fearful grandeur. It is addressed

TO GEORGE DYER.

"Monday [Dec. 20, 1830].

"Dear Dyer,[1]—I would have written before to thank you for your kind letter, written with your own hand. It glads us to see your writing. It will give you pleasure to hear that, after so much illness, we are in tolerable health and spirits once more. Miss Isola intended to call upon you after her night's lodging at Miss Buffam's,[2] but found she was too late for the stage. If she comes to town before she goes home, she will not miss paying her respects to Mrs. Dyer and you, to whom she desires best love. Poor Enfield, that has been so peaceable hitherto, that has caught no inflammatory fever, the tokens are upon her! and a great fire was blazing last night in the barns and haystacks of a farmer, about half a mile from us. Where will these things end? There is no doubt of its being the work of some ill-disposed rustic; but how is he to be discovered? They go to work in the dark with strange chemical preparations unknown to our forefathers. There is not even a dark lantern to have a chance of detecting these Guy Fauxes. We are past the iron age, and are got into the fiery

[1] [This letter, here transcribed from the original autograph, strikes me as being, in one respect,—affording an insight, as it does, into Lamb's political sympathies,—a letter of unusual interest.]

[2] [In Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane: Lamb's head-quarters latterly, whenever he stayed in town. Hazlitt lodged there at one time. I was recently (1885) told that the professional gentleman, who now occupies these apartments, feels a pride in showing them as classic ground.]

age, undream'd of by Ovid. You are lucky in Clifford's Inn where, I think, you have few ricks or stacks worth the burning. Pray keep as little corn by you as you can, for fear of the worst.

"It was never good times in England since the poor began to speculate upon their condition. Formerly, they jogged on with as little reflection as horses: the whistling ploughman went cheek by jowl with his brother that neighed. Now the biped carries a box of phosphorus in his leather-breeches; and in the dead of night the half-illuminated beast steals his magic potion into a cleft in a barn, and half a country is grinning with new fires. Farmer Graystock said something to the touchy rustic that he did not relish, and he writes his distaste in flames. What a power to intoxicate his crude brains, just muddlingly awake, to perceive that something is wrong in the social system!—what a hellish faculty above gunpowder!

"Now the rich and poor are fairly pitted, we shall see who can hang or burn fastest. It is not always revenge that stimulates these kindlings. There is a love of exerting mischief. Think of a disrespected clod that was trod into earth, that was nothing, on a sudden by damned arts refined into an exterminating angel, devouring the fruits of the earth and their growers in a mass of fire! What a new existence!—what a temptation above Lucifer's! Would clod be any thing but a clod, if he could resist it? Why, here was a spectacle last night for a whole country!—a Bonfire visible to London, alarming her guilty towers, and shaking the Monument with an ague fit—all done by a little vial of phosphor in a Clown's fob! How he must grin, and shake his empty noddle in clouds, the Vulcanian Epicure! Can we ring the bells backward?[1] Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilize, and then burn the world? There is a march of Science; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat? Who shall persuade the boor that phosphor will not ignite?

"Seven goodly stacks of hay, with corn-barns proportionable, lie smoking ashes and chaff, which man and beast

[1] [An old custom in England, when an alarm was to be raised. See my "Popular Poetry," 1866, ii., 153. But Lamb might have got the information out of his Burton's "Anatomy," 1621, p. 371.]

would sputter out and reject like those apples of Asphaltes and bitumen.[1] The food for the inhabitants of earth will quickly disappear. Hot rolls may say: 'Fuimus panes, fuit quartern-loaf, et ingens gloria Apple-pasty-orum.' That the good old munching system may last thy time and mine, good un-incendiary George, is the devout prayer of thine "To the last Crust,

"CH. LAMB."[2]

At this time Dyer was much annoyed by some of Lamb's witticisms,—which, in truth, were only modes of expressing his deep-seated regard, and by the quotation of a couplet in one of his early poems, which he had suppressed as liable to be misconstrued by Mr. Rogers. Mr. Barker had unfortunately met with the unexpurgated edition which contained this dubious couplet, and in his "Memorials of Dr. Parr" quoted the passage which, to Mr. Dyer's delicate feelings,[3] conveyed the apprehension that Mr. Rogers

[1] [I am assured, that those only who were living sixty or seventy years ago, and who now half belong in spirit to the last generation, can form any adequate conception of the state of this country during the fifteen or twenty years which preceded the first Reform Bill. The agricultural discontent, the democratic agitation, the incendiarism, and, in short, the critical aspect of public affairs generally, were vividly present to Lamb's mind, doubtless, when he penned this letter to Dyer.]

[2] [Mr. Waller, the autograph-dealer, informed me that his father, after Dyer's death, was called in to buy the letters which the Dyers had received from Lamb. They were in a sort of scullery, and deposited somewhere under the sink, but luckily not injured. Dyer is the Goodall of the paper by Leigh Hunt in his "Men, Women, and Books," 1846, called Jack Abbot's Breakfast. There are many odd stories of his abstraction and simplicity; among others, of his taking the lacquey's hat with a cockade by mistake from a house, and meeting with a friend, who condoled with him on his change of condition; and of his going to a party with a pair of pumps, which he left in the hall, and put on, when he left, carrying home in his hand his muddy boots, which he had worn all the evening. Leigh Hunt describes him, or at least Goodall, as, "a thin grizzled personage in an old great coat instead of a gown, with lanthorn-jaws, shaggy eyebrows, and a most bland and benevolent expression of countenance."]

[3] Mr. Dyer also complained to Mr. Lamb of some suggestions in Elia, which annoyed him, not so much for his own sake as for the sake of others who, in the delicacy of his apprehensiveness, he thought might feel aggrieved by imputations which were certainly not intended, and which they did not deserve. One passage in Elia, hinting that he had

would treat the suppression as colourable, and refer the revival of the lines to his sanction. The following letter was written to dispel those fears from his mind.[1]

TO MR. DYER.

"Feb. 22nd, 1831.

"Dear Dyer,—Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Rogers' friends, are perfectly assured, that you never intended any harm by an innocent couplet, and that in the revivification of it by blundering Barker you had no hand whatever. To imagine that, at this time of day, Rogers broods over a fantastic expression of more than thirty years' standing, would be to suppose him indulging his 'Pleasures of Memory' with a vengeance. You never penned a line which for its own sake you need (dying) wish to blot. You mistake your heart if you think you *can* write a lampoon. Your whips are rods of roses. Your spleen has ever had for its objects vices, not the vicious—abstract offences, not the concrete sinner. But you are sensitive, and wince as much at the consciousness of having committed a compliment, as another man would at the perpetration of an affront. But do not lug me into the same soreness of conscience with yourself. I maintain, and will to the last hour, that I never writ of you but *con amore*. That if any allusion was made to your near-sightedness, it was not for the purpose of mocking an infirmity, but of connecting it with scholar-like habits: for

been hardly dealt with by schoolmasters, under whom he had been a teacher in his younger days, hurt him; as, in fact, he was treated by them with the most considerate generosity and kindness. Another passage which he regarded as implying that he had been underpaid by booksellers also vexed him; as his labours have always been highly esteemed, and have, according to the rate of remuneration of learned men, been well compensated by Mr. Valpy and others. The truth is that Lamb wrote from a vague recollection, without intending any personal reference at all to Mr. Dyer himself, and only seeking to illustrate the pure, simple and elevated character of a man of letters "unspotted from the world." Probably no one has ever applied these suggestions to the parties for whose reputation Mr. Dyer has been so honourably anxious but himself; but it is due to his feelings to state that they are founded in error.

[1] [But that was not so easy. Compare the letter to Moxon of February, 1832, *infrâ*.]

is it not erudite and scholarly to be somewhat near of sight, before age naturally brings on the malady? You could not then plead the *obrepens senectus*. Did I not moreover make it an apology for a certain *absence*, which some of your friends may have experienced, when you have not on a sudden made recognition of them in a casual street-meeting, and did I not strengthen your excuse for this slowness of recognition by further accounting morally for the present engagement of your mind in worthy objects? Did I not, in your person, make the handsomest apology for absent-of-mind people that was ever made? If these things be not so, I never knew what I wrote or meant by my writing, and have been penning libels all my life without being aware of it. Does it follow that I should have exprest myself exactly in the same way of those dear old eyes of yours *now*—now that Father Time has conspired with a hard task-master to put a last extinguisher upon them? I should as soon have insulted the Answerer of Salmasius, when he awoke up from his ended task, and saw no more with mortal vision. But you are many films removed yet from Milton's calamity. You write perfectly intelligibly. Marry, the letters are not all of the same size or tallness; but that only shows your proficiency in the *hands*—text, german-hand, court-hand, sometimes law-hand; and affords variety. You pen better than you did a twelvemonth ago; and if you continue to improve, you bid fair to win the golden pen which is the prize at your young gentlemen's academy. But you must be aware of Valpy and his printing-house, that hazy cave of Trophonius, out which it was a mercy that you escaped with a glimmer. Beware of MSS. and Variæ Lectiones. Settle the text for once in your mind, and stick to it. You have some years' good sight in you yet, if you do not tamper with it. It is not for you (for *us* I should say), to go poring into Greek contractions, and star-gazing upon slim Hebrew points. We have yet the sight

> Of sun, and moon, and star, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

You have vision enough to discern Mrs. Dyer from the other comely gentlewoman who lives up at staircase No. 5;

or, if you should make a blunder in the twilight, Mrs. Dyer has too much good sense to be jealous for a mere effect of imperfect optics. But don't try to write the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments, in the compass of a halfpenny; nor run after a midge or a mote to catch it; and leave off hunting for needles in bushels of hay, for all these things strain the eyes. The snow is six feet deep in some parts here. I must put on jack-boots to get at the post-office with this. It is not good for weak eyes to pore upon snow too much. It lies in drifts. I wonder what its drift is; only that it makes good pancakes, remind Mrs. Dyer. It turns a pretty green world into a white one. It glares too much for an innocent colour, methinks. I wonder why you think I dislike gilt edges. They set off a letter marvellously. Yours, for instance, looks for all the world like a tablet of curious *hieroglyphics* in a gold frame. But don't go and lay this to your eyes. You always wrote hieroglyphically, yet not to come up to the mystical notations and conjuring characters of Dr. Parr. You never wrote what I call a schoolmaster's hand, like Clarke;[1] nor a woman's hand, like Southey;[2] nor a missal hand, like Porson; nor an all-of-the-wrong-side-sloping hand, like Miss Hayes;[3] nor a dogmatic, Mede-and-Persian, peremptory hand, like Rickman; but you ever wrote what I call a Grecian's hand; what the Grecians write (or used) at Christ's Hospital; such as Whalley would have admired, and Boyer have applauded, but Smith or Atwood (writing-masters) would have horsed you for. Your boy-of-genius hand and your mercantile hand are various. By your flourishes, I should think you never learned to make eagles or corkscrews, or flourish the governors' names in the writing-school; and by the tenor and cut of your letters I suspect you were never in it at all.

[1] [Cowden Clarke. His handwriting continued to the last of this character.]

[2] [Southey scarcely wrote a feminine hand, yet it was not very unlike my grandmother Hazlitt's.]

[3] [All that I know of Miss Hayes is, that she is mentioned in a note from Lamb to Miss Betham, noticed below in its place, and that she was, with Basil Montagu, Tuthill, Fenwick, and Marshall, a member of the Godwin set. See Pennell's "Mary Wolstonecraft Godwin," 1885, p. 202.]

By the length of this scrawl you will think I have a design upon your optics; but I have writ as large as I could out of respect to them—too large, indeed, for beauty. Mine is a sort of deputy Grecian's hand; a little better, and more of a worldly hand, than a Grecian's, but still remote from the mercantile. I don't know how it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since school-days. I can never forget I was a deputy Grecian! And writing to you, or to Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to Grecians still. I keep my soaring way above the Great Erasmians,[1] yet far beneath the other. Alas! what am I now? what is a Leadenhall clerk or India pensioner to a deputy Grecian? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! Just room for our loves to Mrs. D., &c. "C. LAMB."

The Lambs had temporarily come up to London, as we have seen, to be nearer their friends and the theatres; but Miss Lamb's health made a return imperative. The immediate cause of illness in this case was an unexpected visit from Southey in Southampton Buildings. The change back to the suburbs was, as usual, beneficial to Miss Lamb; but in a letter of early April, 1831, to Barton, written fantastically in Latin, and stringing together a series of old nursery rhymes, he lets us know that Miss Isola had been taken ill. Possibly the counter-irritation restored the other patient. We notice, too, in this a (premature) forecast of the defeat of the Reform Bill of 1832:—

TO BERNARD BARTON.

"April, 1831.

"Vir Bone!—Recepi literas tuas amicissimas, et in mentem venit responsuro mihi, vel raro, vel nunquam, inter nos intercedisse Latinam linguam organum rescribendi loquendive. Epistolæ tuæ, Plinianis elegantiis (supra quod TREMULO deceat) refertæ, tam a verbis Plinianis adeo abhorrent, ut ne vocem quamquam (Romanam scilicet) habere videtis, quam 'ad canem,' ut aiunt, 'rejectare

[1] [The third form at the Blue Coat School is so called after Erasmus Smith, and for brevity the boys say "Great Eras;" the fourth they christen the "Little Erasmus," both taking their name from Smith.]

possis.' Forsan desuetudo Latinisandi ad vernaculam linguam usitandam, plusquam opus sit, coegit. Per adagia quædam nota, et in ore omnium pervulgata, ad Latinitatis perditæ recuperationem revocare te institui.

"Felis in abaco est, et ægrè videt.

"Omne quod splendet nequaquam aurum putes.

"Imponas equo mendicum, equitabit idem ad diabolum.

"Fur commodè a fure prenditur.

"O MARIA, MARIA, valdè CONTRARIA, quomodo crescit hortulus tuus?

"Nunc majora canamus.

"Thomas, Thomas, de Islington, uxorem duxit die nuperâ Dominicâ. Reduxit domum posterâ. Succedenti baculum emit. Postridie ferit illam. Ægrescit illa subsequenti. Proximâ (nempe Veneris) est mortua. Plurimum gestiit Thomas, quòd appropinquanti Sabbato efferenda sit.

"Horner quidam Johannulus in angulo sedebat, artocreas quasdam deglutiens. Inseruit pollices, pruna nana evellens, et magnâ voce exclamavit 'Dii boni, quàm bonus puer fio!'

"Diddle-diddle-dumkins! meus unicus filius Johannes cubitum ivit, integris braccis, caligâ unâ tantùm, indutus. Diddle-diddle, &c. DA CAPO.

"Hic adsum saltans Joannula. Cum nemo adsit mihi, semper resto sola.

"Ænigma mihi hoc solvas, et Œdipus fies.

"Quâ ratione assimulandus sit equus TREMULO?

"Quippe cui tota communicatio sit per HAY et NEIGH, juxta consilium illud Dominicum, 'Fiat omnis communicatio vestra YEA et NAY.'

"In his nugis caram diem consumo, dum invigilo valetudini carioris nostræ Emmæ, quæ apud nos jamdudum ægrotat. Salvere vos jubet mecum Maria mea, ipsa integrâ valetudine. "ELIA.

"Ab agro Enfeldiense datum, Aprilis nescio' quibus Calendis—Davus sum, non Calendarius.

"P.S.—Perdita in toto est Billa Reformatura."

A few days after he wrote to Cary, excusing himself from going to see him, as he expected Wordsworth, who would not make an appointment. "I think," says he, "within a week or two I shall be able to invite myself some day for a day; but we hermits with difficulty poke out of our shells. Within that ostraceous retirement I meditate not unfrequently on you."

His sister apparently continued pretty well, and so she is described as being on the 6th May in a Latin epistle to the same friend, where the writer speaks of a copy of Euripides which Cary had given them, and over which Lamb pictures himself shedding tears. The nursery ballads were still running in his head. He turns from the Greek tragedian to refer to "Tom of Islington," already cited in the epistle to Barton.

TO MR. CARY.

[Enfield, 6th May, 1831.]

"Assidens est mihi bona soror, Euripiden evolvens, donum vestrum, carissime Cary, pro quo gratias agimus, lecturi atque iterum lecturi idem. Pergratus est liber ambobus, nempe 'Sacerdotis Commiserationis,' sacrum opus a te ipso Humanissimæ Religionis Sacerdote dono datum. Lachrymantes gavisuri sumus; est ubi dolor fiat voluptas; nec semper dulce mihi est ridere; aliquando commutandum est he! he! he! cum heu! heu! heu!

"A Musis Tragicis me non penitus abhorruisse testis sit Carmen Calamitosum, nescio quo autore linguâ prius vernaculâ scriptum, et nuperrimè a me ipso Latine versum, scilicet, 'Tom Tom of Islington.' Tenuistine?

'Thomas Thomas de Islington,
Uxorem duxit Die quâdam Solis,
Abduxit domum sequenti die,
Emit baculum subsequenti,
Vapulat illa posterâ,
Ægrotat succedenti, Mortua fit crastinâ.'

Et miro gaudio afficitur Thomas luce posterâ quod subsequenti (nempe, Dominicâ) uxor sit efferenda.

'En Iliades Domesticas!
En circulum calamitatum!
Planè hebdomadalem tragœdiam.'

I nunc et confer Euripiden vestrum his luctibus, hâc morte uxoriâ; confer Alcesten! Hecuben! quasnon antiquas Heroinas Dolorosas.

"Suffundor genas lachrymis, tantas strages revolvens. Quid restat nisi quod Tecum Tuam Caram salutamus ambosque valere jubeamus, nosmet ipsi bene valentes.

"ELIA.

"Datum ab agro Enfeldiensi, Maii die sextâ, 1831."

It was not till the ensuing month that he wrote to Moxon, apprising him of their removal once more from London and the occasion of it. In the preceding letter to Cary he speaks of both his sister and himself as well, however, and Miss Lamb must therefore have had a fresh attack between the 6th and 12th May.

TO MR. MOXON.

"May 12th, 1831.

"Dear Moxon,—I have brought my sister to Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of recovery in London. Her state of mind is deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of anything in the world out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write or receive a letter in her presence; every little task so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

"Pray assure Southey of my kindliest feelings towards him, and, if you do not see him, send this to him.

"Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever yours,

"C. LAMB.

"Remember me kindly to the Allsops."

After the year 1830 Lamb's verses and essays were chiefly given to his friends, the former consisting of album contributions, the latter of little essences of observation and criticism. Mr. Moxon, having become the publisher of

"The Englishman's Magazine," obtained his aid as a contributor of miscellaneous articles, which were arranged to appear under the comprehensive title of "Peter's Net." The following accompanied his first contribution, in which some reminiscences of the Royal Academy were enshrined.

TO MR. MOXON.

"August, 1831.

"Dear M.,—The *R.A.* here memorised was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name.[1] It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could you get hold of Procter?—his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montague's; or of Janus Weathercock?[2]—both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The 'Peter's Net' does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening 'Elia' at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man—Elia, or the one man Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose, till the magazine comes out; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon, and take a bed? The 'Athenæum' has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in Hone's Book. I like your first number capitally. But is not it small? Come and see us—week-day, if possible.

"Send, or bring me, Hone's number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D.[3] are substantially true; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates?

"The poem I mean is in Hone's Book as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it; but 'tis a poem I

[1] [The number of the "Englishman's Magazine," with the paper entitled "Recollections of a late Royal Academician." See "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, pp. 286-94, where it is reprinted.]

[2] [Wainewright.]

[3] [Elliston the actor and George Dyer.]

envy—*that* and Montgomery's 'Last Man:' I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them. "C. L."

The following contains Lamb's characteristic acknowledgment of a payment on account of these articles.

TO MR. MOXON.

"Sept. 5th, 1831.

"Dear M.,—Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the moneys in trust, till I see you fairly over the next 1st January. Then I shall look upon 'em as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the £10, tho' you may grin) than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

"Yours, very faithfully, "C. L."

The Lambs were at Margate again in 1831. It was there that, thirty years before, they had enjoyed their yearly holiday, and going down in the old Hoy, had first seen the sea. Cowden Clarke was now staying with his father at Ramsgate, the latter having, on retirement from his school at Enfield, settled in this pleasant and healthy locality. In his "Recollections," he tells us how he went over, and saw the friends whom he had made ten years ago. "It seems," he says, "as if it were but yesterday that I noted his [Lamb's] eager way of telling me about an extraordinarily large whale that had been captured there, of its having created lively interest in the place, of its having been conveyed away in a strong cart, on which it lay a huge mass of colossal height, when he added with one of his sudden droll penetrating glances, 'The *eye* has just gone past our window.'" It was while he was here that he received and declined an offer to write a paper for Taylor and Hessey's Magazine, and named Leigh Hunt as one who, in his opinion, would do it better.

TO JOHN TAYLOR.[1]

"Margate, July 8, 1831.

"Dear Sir,—I am extremely sorry to be obliged to decline the article proposed, as I should have been flattered with a Plate accompanying it. In the first place, Midsummer day is not a topic I could make anything of—I am so pure a Cockney, and little read, besides, in May games and antiquities; and, in the second, I am here at Margate, spoiling my holidays with a Review I have undertaken for a friend, which I shall barely get through before my return; for that sort of work is a hard task to me. If you will excuse the shortness of my first contribution—and I *know* I can promise nothing more for July—I will endeavour a longer article for *our next*. Will you permit me to say that I think Leigh Hunt would do the article you propose in a masterly manner, if he has not outwrit himself already upon the subject. I do not return the proof—to save postage—because it is correct, with ONE EXCEPTION. In the stanza from Wordsworth, you have changed DAY into AIR for rhyme-sake: DAY is the right reading, and I IMPLORE you to restore it.

The other passage, which you have queried, is to my ear correct. Pray let it stand.

"D^r S^r, yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"On second consideration, I do enclose the proof."

[Indorsed:]

"Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, Fleet Street, London.
"Only double."

[1] [F. W. Cosens, *orig.* The coolness with Taylor, mentioned in a letter to Allsop in 1827, was perhaps forgotten.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE "ENGLISHMAN'S MAGAZINE" A FAILURE—LETTERS TO MOXON—DEATH OF MUNDEN—LETTER TO LANDOR—NOTES TO MISS MATILDA BETHAM—LAST LETTER TO COLERIDGE.

[1831-2.]

THE "Englishman's Magazine," although enriched with Lamb's articles and some others of great merit, did not meet with a success so rapid as to requite the proprietor for the labour and anxiety of its production. The following is Lamb's letter, in reply to one announcing a determination to discontinue its publication :—

TO MR. MOXON.

"Oct. 24th, 1831.

"To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him; to withhold 'em is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honours, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation, in a letter, which, without flattery, would have made an 'ARTICLE,' and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved, comfort me a little. Will it please or plague you to say that when your parcel came I cursed it, for my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous description of a Landscape of an R.A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day you gave me? Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving to the apprehensions of the whole body of R.A.s; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

"To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which, as —— less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it, (who does not?) you feel awkward at retaking it, (who ought not?)—is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under 10*l.*, by and by, accruing to me—*Devil's Money*;[1] (you are sanguine, say 7*l.* 10*s.*); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it, and, 'by him I will not name,' I won't touch a penny of it. That will split your loss one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

"The Rev. Mr. [Scargill], whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull?*) never sent me any book on Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why I am as old a one-Goddite as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication would bring over the Methodists over the way here?[2] However, I'll give it to the pew opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, for to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will light his pipe with it.

"I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you individually I will just hint that a dropping in to tea, unlooked for, about five, stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

[1] ["Satan in Search of a Wife," 1831.]

[2] Referring to a chapel opposite his lodging at Enfield.

"P.S.—The second volume of 'Elia' is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, 'tis a unique!

"If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By the by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed things monthly, it seemed a labour above Hercules' 'Twelve' in a year, which were evidently monthly contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thousand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both!

"Your ex-Lampoonist or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or 'last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted.'"

The three following are all to Moxon.

TO MR. MOXON.[1]

"One o' clock [no day or year—1831-2.]

"This instant receiv'd. This instant I answer you. Dr. Cresswell has one copy, which I cannot just now redemand, because at his desire I have sent a 'Satan'[2] to him, which when he ask'd for, I frankly told him, was imputed a lampoon on him!!! I have sent it him, & cannot, till we come to explanation go to him or send—

"But on the faith of a Gentleman you shall have it back some day *for* another. The 3 I send. I think 2 of the blunders perfectly immaterial. But your feelings, & I fear *pocket*, is everything. I have just time to pack this off by the 2 o'clock stage.

"Yours, till we meet.

"At all events, I behave more gentleman-like than Emma did, in returning the copies.

"Yours till we meet. Do come.

"Bring the Sonnets. Why not publish 'em, or let another bookseller?"

[No signature.]

[1] [Forster Coll., S.K.M., No. 27.]

[2] [In a recent catalogue occurred a curious slip of punctuation and *italization*, which would have drawn a smile from the author himself:—"Satan in search of a Wife, *woodcuts by Charles Lamb*, 1831."]

Mr. Moxon forwarded to Lamb Mr. Procter's charming little book of "English Songs" and Allan Cunningham's "Maid of Elvar," which elicited this response.

TO EDWARD MOXON.[1]

[1832.]

"Thank you for the books. I am ashamed to take tythe thus of your press. I am worse to a publisher than the two Universities and the Brit. Mus. A[llan] C[unningham] I will forthwith read. B[arry] C[ornwall] (I can't get out of the A, B, C) I have more than read. Taken altogether, 'tis too Lovey; but what delicacies! I like most 'King Death;' glorious 'bove all, 'The Lady with the Hundred Rings;' 'The Owl;' 'Epistle to What's his Name' (here may be I'm partial); 'Sit down, Sad Soul;' 'The Pauper's Jubilee' (but that's old, and yet 'tis never old); 'The Falcon;' 'Felon's Wife;' damn 'Madame Pasty' (but that is borrowed);

> "Apple-pie is very good,
> And so is apple-pasty;
> But ——
> O Lard! 'tis very nasty:

but chiefly the dramatic fragments,—scarce three of which should have escaped my Specimens, had an antique name been prefixed. They exceed his first. So much for the nonsense of poetry; now to the serious business of life. Up a court (Blandford Court) in Pall Mall (exactly at the back of Marlbro' House), with iron gate in front, and containing two houses, at No. 2, did lately live Leishman my taylor. He is moved somewhere in the neighbourhood, devil knows where. Pray find him out, and give him the opposite.[2] I am so much better, tho' my hand shakes in writing it, that, after next Sunday, I can well see F[or-

[1] ["Notes and Queries," 3rd Series, v., 354. It also occurs in Babson's "Eliana," New York, 1866, p. 417.]

[2] [Probably a written message only, as Lamb does not seem to have had any banking account. He once alludes to his practice of keeping his money at home—nothing but five-pound notes.]

ster] and you. Can you throw B. C. in? Why tarry the wheels of my Hogarth? [1]

"CHARLES LAMB."

The following was addressed soon after

TO THE SAME.

"Feb. 1832.

"Dear Moxon,—The snows are ancle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the '*Life*,' which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors. I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, George published the 'Poet's Fate,' in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers; but, Mr. R. not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But George has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard him once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel.[2] As the devil would have it, a fool they call Barker, in his 'Parriana' has quoted the identical two lines, as they stood in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of poor George are again wrung. His letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been laboured out at six sittings. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irregular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted

[1] [The copy of Hogarth which Moxon was to get for Lamb. It was not Nichols' edition of 1808 with a supplement dated 1817, making 3 vols. 4to., but some cheap re-issue. We shall hear of it again in an early Edmonton letter.]

[2] [Compare the letter to Dyer himself of Feb. 22, 1831, *suprâ*, and see that to Coleridge of January 5, 1797, where we hear that Rogers had been sadly aggrieved by a statement on the part of Coleridge in a note with the first edition of his Poems, 1796, that his contemporary was indebted to Bruce's "Loch Lomond" for one of his stories.]

into is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. Rogers some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear old face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront—a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. Rogers: 'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture![1] It should go into the Museum. I am heartily sorry my *Devil* does not answer. We must try it a little longer, and after all I think I must insist on taking a portion of its loss upon myself. It is too much you should lose by two adventures.[2] You do not say how your general business goes on, and I should very much like to talk over it with you here.

"Come when the weather will possibly let you; I want to see the Wordsworths; but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they came down, and but a sort of a house to receive them in; yet I shall regret their departure unseen; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they?

"We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

"You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall; I do not know what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now, then—there are left at Miss Buffam's[3] the 'Tales of the Castle' and certain volumes of the 'Retrospective Re-

[1] [Allusively to the gilt-edged paper used by Dyer.]

[2] [The "Englishman's Magazine" was the other. Moxon was soon to add a third. See letter to him of December 31, 1832.]

[3] [At Southampton Buildings, where Lamb had left behind him some borrowed books.]

view.' The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground-floor, east side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched; it is quite an effort to write this. So, with the '*Life*,' I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows, it would be impossible to expect you, but do not let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

"Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fine-ish weather, when she'll venture.

"Remember us to Allsop and all the dead people, to whom and to London we seem dead."

[No signature.]

The death of Munden, reviving his recollections of "the veteran comedian," called forth the following letter of the 11th February, 1832, to the editor of the "Athenæum," whom Lamb had, for a long time, numbered among his friends.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ATHENÆUM."

"Dear Sir,—Your communication to me of the death of Munden made me weep. Now, Sir, I am not of the melting mood. But, in these serious times, the loss of half the world's fun is no trivial deprivation. It was my loss (or *gain* shall I call it?) in the early time of my play-going, to have missed all Munden's acting. There was only he and Lewis at Covent Garden, while Drury Lane was exuberant with Parsons, Dodd, &c., such a comic company as, I suppose, the stage never showed. Thence, in the evening of my life, I had Munden all to myself, more mellowed, richer, perhaps, than ever. I cannot say what his change of faces produced in me. It was not acting. He was not one of my 'old actors.' It might be better. His power was extravagant. I saw him one evening in three drunken characters. Three farces were played. One part was *Dosey*—I forget the rest; but they were so discriminated that a stranger might have seen them all,

and not have dreamed that he was seeing the same actor. I am jealous for the actor who pleased my youth. He was not a Parsons or a Dodd, but he was more wonderful. He seemed as if he could *do* anything. He was not an actor, but something *better*, if you please. Shall I instance *Old Foresight*, in 'Love for Love,' in which Parsons was at once the old man, the astrologer, &c. Munden dropped the old man, the doater—which makes the character—but he substituted for it a moon-struck character, a perfect abstraction from this earth, that looked as if he had newly come down from the planets. Now, *that* is not what I call *acting*. It might be better. He was imaginative; he could impress upon an audience an *idea*—the low one, perhaps, of a leg of mutton and turnips; but such was the grandeur and singleness of his expressions, that that single expression would convey to all his auditory a notion of all the pleasures they had all received from all the legs of mutton *and turnips* they had ever eaten in their lives. Now, this is not *acting*, nor do I set down Munden amongst my old actors. He was only a wonderful man, exerting his vivid impressions through the agency of the stage. In one only thing did I see him *act*—that is, support a character; it was in a wretched farce, called 'Johnny Gilpin,' for Dowton's benefit, in which he did a cockney. The thing ran but one night; but when I say that Liston's *Lubin Log* was nothing to it, I say little: it was transcendent. And here let me say of actors, *envious* actors, that of *Munden* Liston was used to speak almost with the enthusiasm due to the dead, in terms of such allowed superiority to every actor on the stage, and this at a time when Munden was gone by in the world's estimation, that it convinced me that *artists* (in which term I include poets, painters, &c.), are not so envious as the world think. I have little time, and therefore enclose a criticism on Munden's *Old Dosey* and his general acting [1] by a friend. "C. LAMB."

"Mr. Munden appears to us to be the most *classical* of actors. He is that in high farce, which Kemble was in

[1] A little article inserted in "The Champion" before Lamb wrote his essay on the Acting of Munden. Lamb's reputation may cast on it sufficient interest to excuse its repetition here.

high tragedy. The lines of these great artists are, it must be admitted, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements are in both,—the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of aim, the same concentration of power, the same iron-casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement, and attitude. The hero of farce is as little affected with impulses from without, as the retired Prince of Tragedians. There is something solid, sterling, almost adamantine, in the building up of his most grotesque characters. When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever. It is like what we can imagine a mask of the old Grecian Comedy to have been—only that it lives, and breathes, and changes. His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of farce. He seems as though he belonged to the earliest and the state-liest age of Comedy when, instead of superficial foibles and the airy varieties of fashion, she had the grand asperities of man to work on, when her grotesque images had some-thing romantic about them, and when humour and parody were themselves heroic. His expressions of feeling and bursts of enthusiasm are among the most genuine which we have ever felt. They seem to come up from a depth of emotion in the heart, and burst through the sturdy casing of manner with a strength which seems increased tenfold by its real and hearty obstacle. The workings of his spirit seem to expand his frame, till we can scarcely believe that by measure it is small: for the space which he fills in the imagination is so real, that we almost mistake it for that of corporeal dimensions. His *Old Dosey*, in the excellent farce of 'Past Ten o'Clock,' is his grandest effort of this kind, and we know of nothing finer. He seems to have a 'heart of oak' indeed. His description of a sea-fight is the most noble and triumphant piece of enthusiasm which we remember. It is as if the spirits of a whole crew of nameless heroes 'were swelling in his bosom.' We never felt so ardent and proud a sympathy with the valour of England as when we heard it. May health long be his thus to do our hearts good—for we never saw any actor whose merits have the least resemblance to his even in

species; and when his genius is withdrawn from the stage, we shall not have left even a term by which we can fitly describe it."

We have now to introduce a new name in the correspondence.

TO W. S. LANDOR.

"9 April, 1832.

"Dear Sir,—Pray accept a little volume. 'Tis a legacy from Elia, you'll see. Silver and gold had he none, but such as he had left he you.[1] I do not know how to thank you for attending to my request about the Album. I thought you would never remember it. Are not you proud & thankful, Emma? [*Yes: very both.—Emma Isola.*]

"Many things I had to say to you, which there was not time for. One why should I forget? 'tis for 'Rose Aylmer,' which has a charm I cannot explain. I lived upon it for weeks. Next, I forgot to tell you I knew all your Welch annoyancers, the measureless Bethams.[2] I knew a quarter of a mile of them. 17 brothers and 16 sisters, as they appear to me in memory. There was one of them that used to fix his long legs on my fender, and tell a tale of a shark every night, endless, immortal. How have I grudged the salt sea ravener not having had his gorge of him! The shortest of the daughters measured 5 feet eleven without her shoes.[3] Well, some day we may confer about them. But they were tall. Truly I have discover'd the longitude.

[1] ["Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee."—*Acts*, iii. 6.]

[2] [See a letter from Miss Lamb to Miss Barbara Betham, Nov. 2, 1814, in my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 88. Some notelets from Lamb to her sister Miss Matilda Betham will be noticed presently; and under 1815-16 *supra*, I have already given one letter to the same lady, and extracts from others.]

[3] [A curious parallel case existed formerly in the family of Sir John Sinclair, compiler of that valuable work of reference, the "Statistical Account of Scotland." Sinclair had six daughters only, however, each six feet in height—six-and-thirty feet of them; and the house where they lived at Edinburgh used to be nicknamed the "Giant's Causeway."]

"Sir, if you can spare a moment, I should be happy to hear from you. That rogue Robinson detained your verses, till I call'd for them. Don't entrust a bit of prose to the rogue; but believe me

"Your obliged "C. L.

"My sister sends her kind regards.

"W. S. Landor, Esq.,
"From Ch. Lamb."

Coleridge, now in declining health, seems to have feared, from a long intermission of Lamb's visits to Highgate, that there was some estrangement between them, and to have written to Lamb under that idea. The following note shews how much he was mistaken.

TO MR. COLERIDGE.

"April 14th, 1832.

"My dear Coleridge,—Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you. But I have been wofully neglectful of you, so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence, and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gilmans, when I come.

"Yours *semper idem* "C. L.

"If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah; and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and maybe a wrong prophet of your bodings!—here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer, showers.

"My direction is simply, Enfield."

CHAPTER XIX.

LETTERS TO MOXON, TALFOURD, AND FORSTER—LAST LETTER TO THE HAZLITTS.

[1832-3.]

THE present section brings us into the region of Notes and Notelets. The era of letter-writing has almost ceased. Many of those to whom Lamb delighted to deliver his thoughts at large are dead, or in failing health, and the spirit which their sympathy and communion had awakened and stimulated begins to wax languid. Short perfunctory rejoinders to inquiries, formal acknowledgments of friendly offers, scraps which are scarcely more than autographs, stand in the room of those splendid journal-like epistles to Coleridge, Wordsworth, Manning, Barton, and the Hazlitts. Very little else to come now. The first is unusually plaintive and lugubrious; but there is in it, notwithstanding, a certain hopeful transparency. The writer looks forward to seeing Moxon and the author of the "Statesmen of the Commonwealth" soon.

TO MR. MOXON.

[June 1, 1832.]

"I am a little more than half alive. I was more than half dead. The Ladies[1] are very agreeable. I flatter myself I am less than disagreeable. Convey this to Mr. Forster—whom with you I shall just be able to see some ten days hence, "And believe me ever yours, "C. L.

"I take Forster's name to be John; but you know whom I mean—the Pym-praiser, not pimp-raiser.

"Mr. Moxon,
"64, New Bond Street."

[1] [Miss Isola and her schoolfellow Maria Fryer.]

His counsel was being again sought by Moxon, whom he used his influence to dissuade from imprudent ventures. The allusion at the end is to a murder which had then recently taken place at Edmonton.

TO MR. MOXON.

[Edmonton, Dec., 1832.]

"This is my notion. Wait till you are able to throw away a round sum (say £1,500) upon a speculation, and then—don't do it. For all your loving encouragements—till this final damp came in the shape of your letter,—thanks; and for books also. Greet the Forsters & Procters—and come singly or conjunctively as soon as you can. Johnson & Fare's sheets have been washed, unless you prefer Danby's last bed at the Horseshoe." [1]

The next chronicles the discontinuance of a periodical which had succeeded the "Englishman's Magazine," and proved equally unsuccessful.

TO MR. MOXON.[2]

[Dec. 31st, 1832.]

"I am very sorry the poor 'Reflector' is abortive. 'Twas a child of great promise for its weeks. But if the chances are so much against it, withdraw immediately. It is idle up-hill waste of money to spend another stamp upon it.

"Mr. Moxon,
"64, New Bond Street."

This is the last trace in the Correspondence of a name, which has become tolerably familiar to the eye and ear.

[1] [See my "Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 209.]

[2] [From the autograph in the Forster Collection. Round the seal Lamb has written: "Obiit Edwardus Reflector Armiger, 31 decri, 1832, natus tres hebdomadas. Pax animæ ejus." On the 23rd he had written to the Editor, care of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, 14, Bouverie Street. But only the cover of his letter is among the Forster relics.]

TO H. C. ROBINSON.

[Jan., 1833.]

"For Landor's[1] kindness I have just esteem. I shall tip him a letter when you tell me how to address him.

"Give Emma's kindest regrets that I could not entice her good frend your Nephew here.

"Her warmest love to the Bury Robinsons—Our all three to H. Crab. "C. L.

"H. C. Robinson, Esq.,
"2 Plowden's Buildings,
"Middle Temple."

In February, 1833, the following letter was addressed by Lamb, on his being made Serjeant,

TO MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

"My dear T.,—Now cannot I call him *Serjeant;* what is there in a coif? Those canvas-sleeves protective from ink,[2] when he was a law-chit—a *Chitty*ling, (let the leathern apron be apocryphal) do more 'specially plead to the Jury Court of old memory. The costume (will he agnize it?) was as of a desk-fellow or Socius Plutei. Methought I spied a brother!

"That familiarity is extinct for ever. Curse me if I can call him Mr. Serjeant—except, mark me, in *company.* Honour where honour is due; but should he ever visit us, (do you think he ever will, Mary?) what a distinction should I keep up between him and our less fortunate friend, H. C. R.! Decent respect shall always be the Crabb's—but, somehow, short of reverence.

"Well, of my old friends, I have lived to see two knighted:

[1] [Landor had written some verses for Emma Isola's Album.]

[2] Mr. Lamb always insisted that the costume referred to was worn when he first gladdened his young friend by a call at Mr. Chitty's Chambers. I am afraid it is all apocryphal.—TALFOURD. [The joke about the "first great cause least understood" (from the second stanza of Pope's "Universal Prayer") was made in reference to Talfourd's first brief.]

one made a judge, another in a fair way to it. Why am I restive? why stands my sun upon Gibeah?

"Variously, my dear Mrs. Talfourd, [I can be more familiar with her!] *Mrs. Serjeant Talfourd*,—my sister prompts me—(these ladies stand upon ceremonies)—has the congratulable news affected the members of our small community. Mary comprehended it at once, and entered into it heartily. Mrs. Westwood was, as usual, perverse — wouldn't, or couldn't, understand it. A Serjeant? She thought Mr. T. was in the law. Didn't know that he ever 'listed.

"Emma alone truly sympathised. *She* had a silk gown come home that very day, and has precedence before her learned sisters accordingly.

"We are going to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Serjeant, with all the young serjeantry—and that is all that I can see that I shall get by the promotion.

"Valete, et mementote amici quondam vestri humillimi,

"C. L."

In the spring of 1833 Lamb made his last removal from Enfield to Edmonton.

[Since allusion has lately been made to the Bethams in the letter to Landor, and the names of Matilda and her two sisters, Barbara and Anne Betham, have occurred more than once,[1] this may be as appropriate and convenient a place as any for noticing a little hoard of notes to Matilda lately brought to light.[2] They are almost exclusively of the years 1833 and 1834. In introducing this lady under the year 1815, we pointed out that she, in common with Lamb's other female correspondents, was in the habit of confiding her MSS. to him for his opinion and her proofs for his revising hand. The task occasionally proved too troublesome, and we find him declining the duty with regret in the letter elsewhere given. The Bethams were Inner Temple Lane friends, and there are, besides the series from Charles, at least two from Mary Lamb to Matilda and Barbara Betham. Both have been printed.[3]

[1] [See *suprâ*, vol. i., p. 446, and vol. ii., pp. 1 and 24.]

[2] [At a sale at Puttick's rooms, Dec. 24, 1884. But some of them had been printed, partly or entire, in "Fraser."]

[3] ["Mary and Charles Lamb," 1874, p. 88, and "Fraser's Magazine" for July, 1878.]

The likelihood has been advanced before, that the Lambs and Bethams may have owed their first knowledge of each other to the Fenwicks—Fenwick, editor of the "Albion." There is a note from Lamb himself to Miss Betham, saying, "Eliza [Fenwick ?] is gone to pass some days with Miss Hayes: God forbid I should

"Pass my days
With Miss Hays ——"

This was the friend of the Godwins already mentioned; she must have been quite an elderly lady. The majority, however, of these communications are mere scraps written on fragments of soiled foolscap, and do not seem in many cases to have passed through the post. In one of August 23rd, 1833, Lamb writes: "Don't trouble yourself about Dyer's neighbour. He will only tell you a parcel of lies." Several record Miss Lamb's deplorable state, for the most part, during these two years. In one, the writer airs his French in the usual way: "Excuse the cover being not *oo fa*, is not that French?" And so they go on, an odd assemblage of inconsiderable trifles, with which, in arranging a correspondence, it is somewhat difficult to deal. Here, however, are two of them, apparently both of the Edmonton period. The first refers to the illness of Mrs. Southey, the Edith of earlier and happier times, and likewise shews that Miss Betham was still submitting MSS. to Lamb. In the second, he has lately migrated to Edmonton, and acknowledges a bequest which his friend's sister Anne had left him, declining it at the same time if it was likely to be of any use to the family.

TO MISS MATILDA BETHAM.

[No date.]

"Dear Miss Betham,—I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank, as you requested. Poor S., what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you soon in town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect and love you more

than ourselves. Pray present our kind remembrances to Barbara and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable. "Yours very sincerely,

"C. LAMB."

Another makes known the removal to Edmonton on his sister's account, and draws a piteous picture of their domestic interior. In a short note belonging to the same period, and addressed to the same lady, Lamb says:—"I cannot attend to anything but the most simple things. I am very much unhinged indeed." The seizures were growing more frequent, and their duration more prolonged. We have yet to unbury the secret of the malady which, in the sister's case, intensified by physical causes, produced such lamentable consequences—not so much truly to her aged mother, as to Lamb himself through all his after-life. We want the clue, since we are destitute of any detailed information about the family prior to the father and mother, of whom neither, so far as the little that we know of them goes, afforded any symptoms of dementia. But there was almost undoubtedly some transmitted taint. It is no legitimate ground for astonishment that Lamb should have sometimes been irritable, petulant, gloomy; the marvel, on the contrary, must always be, that he did not completely succumb to such a continuous and exhausting strain.

TO THE SAME.

[Edmonton, May 23, 1833.]

"Dear Miss Betham,—I sit down, very poorly, to write to you, being come to Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton, to be altogether with poor Mary, who is very ill, as usual, only that her illnesses are now as many months as they used to be weeks in duration—the reason your letter only just found me. I am saddened with the havoc death has made in your family. I do not know how to appreciate the kind regard of dear Anne; Mary will understand it two months hence, I hope; but neither she nor I would rob you, if the legacy will be of use to, or comfort to you. My hand shakes so I can hardly write. On Satur-

day week I must come to town, and will call on you in the morning before one o'clock. Till when I take kindest leave. "Your old Friend, "C. LAMB."]

In 1833 the choicest prose essays, which Lamb had written since the publication of "Elia," were collected and published under the title of "The Last Essays of Elia;" by Mr. Moxon. The work contains ample proof that the powers of the author had ripened rather than declined; for the paper called "Blakesmoor in H—shire," which embodies his recollection of the old mansion in which his grandmother lived as housekeeper: those on Elliston, "Captain Jackson" and "The Old Margate Hoy," are among the most original, the least constrained, and the most richly coloured of his works. It was favourably noticed by almost all the principal critics—by many enthusiastically and sincerely praised—and an admirable notice in "The Quarterly" was subsequently published. His indisposition to write, however, increased; but in creating so much, excellent in its kind, so complete in itself, and so little tinged with alloy, he had, in truth, done enough, and had earned in literature, as in the drudgery of the desk, a right to repose.

[The two earliest of the following series of notes to Moxon and Forster relate to the second volume of "Elia," which had been submitted to Forster for his suggestions, more particularly as to the title and preliminaries. They were sent, as we shall see, while Lamb was continuing to contribute to Dilke's new paper. Mr. Dilke was a very intelligent and kind-hearted man, and shewed much attention to Keats, who particularly mentions him in a letter to Miss Brawn. He edited a supplement to Dodsley in 1816 with considerable judgment and acumen. Dilke, Armitage Brown, Keats, Leigh Hunt, and Thomas Park the antiquary, formed for some years a literary coterie at Hampstead, and at Highgate soon after came Coleridge to live with Gilman.]

TO MR. MOXON.

[1833.]

"I send you the last proof—not of my friendship—pray see to the finish.

"I think you will see the necessity of adding those words after 'Preface'—and 'Preface' should be in the Contents—table.

"I take for granted you approve the title. I do thoroughly.

"Perhaps if you advertise it in full, as it now stands, the title page might have simply the Last Essays of Elia, to keep out any notion of its being a second vol.

"Well, I wish us luck heartily for your sake, who have smarted by me.

"Edward Moxon, Esq.,
"Dover Street,
"Piccadilly."

TO JOHN FORSTER.[1]

[1833.]

"I wish you to go to Dilke's, or let Mockson, & ax him to add this to what I sent him a few days since, or to continue it the week after. The Plantas, &c., are capital. Come down with Procter and Dante[2] on Sunday. I send you the last proof—not of my friendship. I knew you would like the title. I do thoroughly. The Last Essays of Elia keeps out any idea of its being a second volume.

"John Forster, Esq.,
"4, Burton Street,
"Burton Crescent."

TO THE SAME.[3]

[No date, ? 1833.]

"Orders.

"Go to Dilke's,[4] or let Mockson & ax him to add this

[1] [From a copy in the handwriting of Forster.]

[2] [Cary.]

[3] [From the autograph. This seems to be a separate scrap, and to have been sent by hand.]

[4] "I don't mean at his House, but at the Athenæum office. Send it there. Hand shakes."—*Addition by Lamb on a separate sheet.*

to what I sent him a few days since, or to continue it the week after. The Plantas, &c., are capital.

"Requests.

"Come down with M.[1] & *Dante* & L. E. L.[2] on Sunday."

TO THE SAME.[3]

[1833. Postmark partly obliterated.]

"Come down to-morrow or Saturday; be here by two or half after. Coaches from Snow Hill.

"C. LAMB.

"John Forster, Esq.,
"4, Burton Street,
"Burton Crescent."

TO MR. MOXON.

[Feb. 10, 1833.]

"I wish you would omit 'by the author of Elia' now, in advertizing that damn'd 'Devil's Wedding.'[4]

"I had sneaking hopes you would have dropt in to-day; 'tis my poor birthday. Don't stay away so. Give Forster a hint. You are to bring your brother some day—*sisters* in better weather.

"Pray give me one line to say if you receiv'd & forwarded Emma's pacquet to Miss Adams—and how Dover Street looks. Adieu.

"Is there no Blackwood this month? What separation will there be between the Friend's preface and THE ESSAYS? Should not 'Last Essays, &c.,' head them? If 'tis too late, don't mind. I don't care a farthing about it."

[No signature.]

When the subjoined was written, Moxon had succeeded in obtaining a Hogarth, which Lamb thought cheap, but

[1] [Moxon.]
[2] [Miss Landon.]
[3] [From the autograph.]
[4] ["Satan in Search of a Wife," 1831, referred to above in a letter to Moxon of 1831-2.]

which was only a re-issue in parts of the book originally published between 1808 and 1817. He had waited long enough for it, for he inquires in a letter of 1832, why it had not been forwarded.

TO MR. MOXON.

[Edmonton, 1833.]

"Dear M.,—A thousand thanks for your punctualities. What a cheap book is the last Hogarth you sent me! I am pleased now that Hunt *diddled* me out of the old one. Speaking of this, only think of the new farmer with his 30 acres! There is a portion of land in Lambeth Parish, called *Knave's* [*Pedlar's*] *Acre*. I wonder he overlook'd it. Don't show this to the firm of Dilke & Co. I next want one copy of 'Leicester's School' and wish you to pay Leishman, Taylor, 2, Blandford Place, Pall Mall, opposite the British Institution, £6 10s., for coat and waistcoat, &c., &c., and I vehemently thirst for the fourth No. of Nichols's 'Hogarth,' to bind 'em up (the two books) as Hogarth & Supplement.

"But as you know the price, don't stay for its appearance; but come as soon as ever you can with your bill of all demands in full, and as I have none but £5 notes, bring with you sufficient change. Weather is beautiful. I grieve sadly for Miss Wordsworth. We are all well again. Emma is with us, & we all shall be glad of a sight of you. Come on Sunday if you *can*, better if you come before. Perhaps Rogers would smile at this. A pert half chemist half apothecary in our town who smatters of literature, & is immeasurably unlettered, said to me, 'Pray, Sir, may not Hood (he of the acres) be reckon'd the Prince of Wits in the present day?' To which I assenting, he adds, 'I had always thought that Rogers had been reckon'd the Prince of Wits; but I suppose that Mr. Hood has the better title to that appellation.' To which I replied, that Mr. R. had wit with much better qualities, but did not aspire to the principality. He had taken all the puns manufactured in 'John Bull' for our friend in sad & stupid earnest. One more *Album Verses*, please. "C. L."

The last vestige of William Hone in these pages finds him still at his establishment in Gracechurch-street, which eventually collapsed. He had by this time changed his opinions, and turned religious enthusiast; and in a letter of March 6th, 1833, Lamb acknowledges "a Christian epistle," which Hone had sent him by "a vain young man," who had detained it, which receives an elucidation from Hone's MS. memorandum on the letter: "This acknowledges a note from me to C. L. written in January preceding, and sent by young Will Hazlitt." "We should rejoice," he says, "to see thy outward man here, especially on a day which should not be a first day, being liable to worldly callers in on that day." He refers to Taylor's injunction against Moxon, on account of the second series of "Elia," and begs his old acquaintance to copy out and bring with him some verses on Aders's pictures which had been printed in the "Table Book." This admirable piece of quaint raillery winds up like a Quaker's missive: "Triphena and Triphosa, whom the world calleth Mary and Emma, greet you with me. 6th of 3rd month, 4th day." We are reminded of the letters to Barton; but towards the writer of the "Queen's Matrimonial Ladder" and the "Slap at Slop" the employment of such a phraseology could have been at best only semi-serious.

The injunction against "Elia" did not at any rate preclude a few select friends from receiving copies. We have not heard of Manning since 1825; he had been one of the old and great correspondents, and his letters which, judging from Lamb's estimate of them, must have been highly amusing and valuable (for they have not been preserved), had the effect of evolving from their recipient a series in reply, without which the present correspondence would lose much of its importance and curiosity. The date of Thomas Manning's death has not been ascertained; but when the "Final Memorials" appeared in 1848, he is described as no longer living:[1] he had known Lamb since 1799. But

[1] [The obituaries of the "Gentleman's Magazine" from 1833 to 1848 do not seem to contain any notice of Manning. From a variety of allusions I am led to suppose that he (like Robinson) came from Suffolk —perhaps from Bungay. In the number of the Magazine for July, 1805, the death of Mrs. Manning, widow of T. Manning, Esq., who had

it was, I fear, as with others. The new faces had supplanted the old: to Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Manning, had succeeded a host of latter-day acquaintances, with whom the continuity of association was severed, and the fine antique memories of Lamb's youth, chastened, howsoever, with sadness, could find no fraternal response. The indication of Manning below is the latest clue which we at present possess. Many of the familiar names begin to fall out of the roll, and to fade into middle distance, from a diversity of causes.

TO MR. MOXON.

"March 19, 1833.

"I shall *expect* Forster and two Moxons on Sunday, and *hope* for Procter.

"I am obliged to be in town next Monday. Could we contrive to make a party (paying or not is immaterial) for Miss Kelly's that night? & can you shelter us after the play—I mean Emma and me? I fear I cannot persuade Mary to join us.

"N.B.—*I* can sleep at a public house. Send an Elia[1] (mind I *insist* on buying it) to T. Manning, Esq., at Sir G. Tuthill's, Cavendish-square. Do write.

[No signature.]

"Edw. Moxon, Esq.,
"44, Dover Street,
"Piccadilly."

TO JOHN FORSTER.

"April 24, 1833.

"Do come.

"I have placed poor Mary at Edmonton. I shall be very glad to see the Hunch Back and Strait Back,[2] the first evening they can come. I am very poorly indeed; I have

died in February, 1797, is recorded. This could not have been Manning's father, who was living in 1806, and was in orders. But it might have been the grandfather.]

[1] [The "Last Essays of Elia," then recently published.]

[2] [Knowles (and Forster?). Lamb usually spelt "straight" in this way.]

been cruelly thrown out. Come, and don't let me drink too much. I drank more yesterday than I ever did any one day in my life. "C. L.

"Do come. Cannot your Sister come and take a half-bed or a whole one, which, alas! we have to spare?"

TO THE SAME.

[May 13, 1833.]

"Dear Boy,—I send you the original Elias complete. When I am a little composed, I shall hope to see you and Procter here; may be, may see you first in London.

"C. L.

"J. Forster, Esq.,
"4, Burton Street,
"Burton Crescent.

"From C. L. Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton."

The following note to Mr. Moxon, on some long forgotten occasion of momentary displeasure, contains a fantastical exaggeration of anger against somebody who had taken a liberty with Lamb's writings, possibly the author of certain facetious paragraphs, purporting to come from his pen, as the elaborate imitation by John Hamilton Reynolds, in his volume of "Rejected Articles," was a thing of the past.

TO MR. MOXON.

"1833.

"Dear M.,—Many thanks for the books; but most thanks for one immortal sentence: 'If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again.' I do not know whether to admire most the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation, by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. Keep your hands from picking and stealing, is no ways referable to his acquists. I doubt

whether bearing false witness against thy neighbour at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation!—unworthy to have seen Moses behind!—to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia! Has the irreverent ark-toucher been struck blind, I wonder? The more I think of him, the less I think of him. His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas! The great BEAST! The beggarly NIT!

"More when we meet; mind, you'll come, two of you; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dishallowed by descending so low? Amen. Maledicatur in extremis!

"C. L."

He was now about to lose the society of Miss Isola, on the eve of marriage, and, having recently determined to live altogether with his sister, whether in her sanity or her madness, announced this change in a letter recalling those of older days

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"[Edmonton,] end of May, nearly [1833].

"Dear Wordsworth,—Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing. Nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration,—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her at a Mr. Walden's and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had

the care of her before. I see little of her; alas! I too often hear her. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it.

"To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the 'youth of our house,' Emma Isola. I have her here now for a little while; but she is too nervous properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits,—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is to be wedded to Moxon at the end of August—so 'perish the roses and the flowers'—how is it?

"Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from Enfield. I am with attentive people and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I avail myself. I have few friends left there—one or two though most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though of the latter there should be not one known one remaining.

"Thank you for your cordial reception of 'Elia.' *Inter nos*, the 'Ariadne' is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustrative.

"I want you in the 'Popular Fallacies'[1] to like the 'Home that is no home,' and 'Rising with the lark.'

"I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can't read much in summer time.

"With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy,

"I remain most affectionately yours,

"C. LAMB.

"At Mr. Walden's, Church-street, Edmonton, Middlesex.

"Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON, (will you

[1] A series of articles contributed under this title by Lamb to the "New Monthly Magazine."

pardon me?[1]) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop."

Miss Lamb did not escape all the cares of housekeeping by the new arrangement: the following little note shows the grotesque uses to which Lamb turned the smaller household anxieties :—

TO MR. MOXON.

"April 27th, 1833.

"Dear M.,—Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child who, sleeping or not sleeping next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age! We propose, when you and Emma agree on the time, to come up and meet you at the B——'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

"Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy in your happiness. "C. L.

"Our old and ever loves to dear Emma."

His sister's relapse into derangement forms the topic of the last letter to a very early friend.

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

[May 31, 1833.]

"Dear Mrs. Hazlitt,—I will assuredly come, and find you out, when I am better. I am driven from house & home by Mary's illness. I took a sudden resolution to take my sister to Edmonton, where she was under medical treatment last time, and have arranged to board & lodge with the people. Thank God, I have repudiated Enfield. I have got out of hell, despair of heaven, and must sit down contented in a half-way purgatory. Thus ends this strange eventful history—

[1] It had been proposed by Lamb that Mr. W. should be the possessor of the portrait if he outlived his friend, and that afterwards it was to be bequeathed to Christ's College, Cambridge. [It is now in the National Portrait Gallery.]

"But I am nearer town, and will get up to you somehow before long—

"I repent not of my resolution.

"'Tis late, & my hand unsteady, so good b'ye till we meet.

"Your old "C. L.

"Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton."

[Indorsed:]

"Mrs. Hazlitt, No. 4 Palace Street,[1] Pimlico."

The following can only be approximately dated by its allusion to Miss Isola as still unmarried. It is the last letter to the Hazlitt family. In his letter of May 31 to Mrs. Hazlitt, to which this is clearly subsequent, Lamb signified an intention of coming to see her, which circumstances probably precluded. The "young ladies" mentioned below were probably Miss Isola and her schoolfellow, Maria Fryer, of Chatteris, in Cambridgeshire:—

TO WILLIAM HAZLITT JUNIOR.

[June or July, 1833.]

"My dear Wm.,—I am very uncomfortable, and when Emma leaves me, I shall wish to be quite alone, therefore pray tell your Mother I regret that I cannot see her here this time, but hope to see her when times are better with me. The young ladies are very pleasant, but my spirits have much ado to keep pace with theirs. I decidedly wish to be alone, or I know of none I should rather see than your mother. Make my best excuse. Emma[2] will explain to you the state of my wretched spirits.

"Yours, "C. LAMB.

[1] [I believe that this was the very house where my grandfather and grandmother Reynell had lived many years before, and where Leigh Hunt, before his marriage, resided with them. A few doors off was the Ciceronian Academy, where their eldest son went to school; it was kept by Dr. Duncan, who was also a preacher at an adjacent chapel.]

[2] [This letter is written on the first page of a quarto sheet of paper. The remaining portion is occupied by a letter to W. Hazlitt from Miss Isola, which I subjoin:—

"Maria and I have had a good laugh over your funny letter. I was astonished at the fine writing, and it afforded us great amusement, I

"When I am wretched, company makes me tenfold more so."

[Indorsed:]

"Mr. Wm. Hazlitt, Junr., 36 Southampton Buildings, Holborn, or at the Southampton Arms."

He about the same time excused himself from going to see Coleridge at Highgate. Miss Lamb and he were busy with preparations for the wedding, and they had friends to boot. The result of the excitement was an illness of two or three weeks, from which his sister recovered only at the end of the month. This is the last note to Allsop:—

TO THOMAS ALLSOP.

[Early in July, 1833.]

"My dear Allsop,—I think it will be impossible for us to come to Highgate in the time you propose. We have friends coming to-morrow, who may stay the week; and we are in a bustle about Emma's leaving us—so we will put off the hope of seeing Mrs. Allsop till we come to Town,

assure you. You must indeed have found it very warm; but I daresay that you manage to parade Regent Street daily; taste is every thing. Your sonnet is indeed admirable for the first; but perhaps *your ideas* might have been more engaged on eating at this time, so you had better chosen it as your subject. We have had such a delightful walk to Waltham this morning, and rested ourselves with Biscuits and Ginger Beer (not so vulgar as you are), and then visited the Abbey; but unfortunately we could not meet with the man. I am sorry your mother will not be able to visit Enfield [Edmonton]; but indeed Mr. L.'s spirits are very bad, or I am sure he would have been happy. But he is very indifferent, and hopes to get better by being alone. Do pray give my kind love to your mother. I am now writing on THE Portfolio; it looks very neat. We believe all your tale of Mr. Moxon, and I think it unkind you should refuse to render assistance to any one; but undoubtedly you have your own reasons.

"I am sorry to say Maria leaves me to-morrow. I shall miss her sadly, and we have enjoyed ourselves so much, which makes us less inclined to part. But I expect to leave next week. Holidays are bad, so unsettling. But I could not do without them [two or three words illegible to me]. Maria sends her love. I am,

"Yours Sincerely,

"EMMA ISOLA."]

after Emma's going, which is in a fortnight and a half, when we mean to spend a time in Town, but shall be happy to see you on Sunday or any day.

"In haste. Hope our little Porter does.

"Your ever, "C. L."

CHAPTER XX.

RECONCILIATION WITH GODWIN—MARRIAGE OF EMMA ISOLA—LETTERS TO FORSTER, MOXON, CARY, AND ROGERS.

[1833.]

IN the earlier years, several letters had passed between Lamb and Godwin, the last in 1822, when the former so nobly came forward to help one of the friends of his youth. Latterly, as Godwin's biographer informs us, there had been, from some unknown cause, but perhaps from no cause at all beyond distance of dwelling and weight of years, a slight coolness. But, judging from the tone and language of the letter from Lamb to Godwin's daughter (July 26, 1827), the feeling was not very pronounced or deeply seated; and now Rickman, that other very ancient name on the roll of Lamb's acquaintance, used his good offices, and invited both to meet at a dinner given by him at the Bell at Edmonton, "where," in Rickman's words, "Mrs. Gilpin once dined, or meant to dine."[1] The dinner took place on July 19th, 1833, and the old cordiality was happily restored.

On the approach of the Moxons' wedding-day, fixed for 30th July, Lamb turned to the account of a half-tearful merriment the gift of a watch to the young lady whom he was about to lose.

TO MR. MOXON.

"July 24th, 1833.

"For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage,

[1] [Kegan Paul's "Godwin," 1876, ii. 322.]

as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, 'Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?' and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see 'what the time is.' I overheard her whispering, 'Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow.' This little present of Time!—why,—'tis Eternity to her!

"What can make her so fond of a ginger-bread watch?

"She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away 'half-past twelve,' which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

"Well, if 'love me, love my watch,' answers, she will keep time to you.

"It goes right by the Horse Guards.

"Dearest M,—Never mind opposite[1] nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

"Yours ever, "ELIA.

"We have not heard from Cambridge.[2] I will write the moment we do.

"Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch."

Miss Lamb was in a sad state of mental derangement up to the day of the wedding, but in the constant companionship of her brother at Edmonton. The following little letter to the new-married from Charles, introducing one from Mary—shows the happy effect of the news on her mental health.

[1] Written on the opposite page to that in which the previous affectionate banter appears.

[2] [From the friends through whom the Lambs first saw Miss Isola.]

TO MR. AND MRS. MOXON.

"August, 1833.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon,—Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. 'I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes,' she says; but you shall see it.

"Dear Moxon,—I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

"I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner before post-time. So with twenty thousand congratulations . "Yours,

"C. L.

"I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by 'eavens, *half as sober as a judge*. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now—

"Wednesday.

"Dears, again,—Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon. "C. L.

"'Never was such a calm or such a recovery.' 'Tis her own words, undictated."

Very few of the trifles which we now give call for comment. Of some of them the chronology is very obscure from the absence of dates and postmarks and the deficiency of internal evidence. That to Moxon about taking Emma to the opera may have been written before his marriage.

Ready to obey the call of friendship, he wrote both prologue and epilogue to Knowles's play of "The Wife;" the composition of which must have been mere labour, as they are only decently suited to the occasion, and have no mark or likelihood to repay the vanity of the poet.

Some of the following notes bear on this subject—the play by Knowles; but one to Mr. Tuff was manifestly written a little before, just when Knowles had come to Lamb to read "The Wife" to him in MS.

TO JOHN FORSTER.

[Edmonton, spring of 1833.]

"There was a talk of Richmond on Sunday; but we are hampered with an unavoidable engagement that day; besides that, I wish to show it you when its woods are in full leaf. Can you have a quiet evening here to-night or to-morrow night? We are certainly at home.

"Yours, "C. LAMB.

"Friday."

[Added in Forster's hand:]

"To myself from Edmonton, 1832." [1]

TO MR. TUFF.

[Edmonton, ? July, 1833.]

"D^R S^R,—I learn that Covent Garden, from its thin houses every night, is likely to be shut up after Saturd^y: so that no time is to be lost in using the orders.[2]

"Yours, "C. LAMB."

[Endorsed:]

"To Mr. Tuff."

TO MR. MOXON.

[1833.]

"Dear M,—Emma has asked me to take her into the gallery of an opera on Monday, and I have written for orders. We came up this morning. Can you house and bed us after the opera? Miss Moxon, may be, won't object to sharing half her bed. And for *me*, I can sleep on straw, rushes, thorns, Procrustes' couch—or anywhere. Do not write, if you *can take* us in. Write only IF YOU can't. "CH. LAMB."

[1] [But the Lambs did not adopt Edmonton as a residence till 1833.]

[2] [Some box-orders which Lamb had received from Knowles. Mr. T. Tuff, to whom this little note was addressed, published "Historical, Topographical, and Statistical Notices of Enfield," 1858.]

TO JOHN FORSTER.

[Edmonton, summer of 1833.]

"Swallow your damn'd dinner & your brandy & water fast, & come immediately. I want to take Knowles in to Emma's only female friend [1] for five minutes only. We are free for the evening. I'll do a Prologue."

[No signature.]

"Messrs. Knowles & Forster."

TO JOHN FORSTER.

[1833.]

"Dear F.,—Can you oblige me by sending 4 Box Orders undated for the Olympic Theatre? I suppose Knowles can get 'em. It is for the Waldens, with whom I live. The sooner the better, that they may not miss 'The Wife.' I meet you at the Talfourds Saturday week; and if they can't, perhaps you can, give me a bed.

"Yours ratherish unwell, "C. LAMB.

"Or write immediately to say if you can't get 'em.

"Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton."

[Endorsed:]

"J. Forster, Esq.,
"4, Burton Street,
"Burton Crescent."

TO MR. MOXON.

[August, 1833.]

"PROLOGUE.

"Last line alter to—

"'A *store* of gratitude is left behind.'

Because, as it now stands, if the Author lays his hand upon his heart, and emfattically says—

"'I have (so & so) behind,'

the audience may think it is all my * * * in a bandbox. & so in fact it is.

"Yours, by old & new ties, "C. LAMB.

[1] [Miss Fryer.]

"Mind, I don't care the 100,000th part of a bad sixpence if Knowles gets a prologue[1] more to his mind.

> "Condemn them, damn them, hiss them, as you will;
> Their Author is your grateful servant still."

"I want to see Fouster (not the German Foust).

"E. Moxon, Esq.,
"44, Dover Street,
"Piccadilly."

TO JOHN FORSTER.[2]

[No date.]

"Am I right? *Sarah* I distinctly remember, but *Mary* I am not sure ought not to be *Anne*. It is soon rectified in that case. *You* I take to be John.

[No signature.]

"John Forster, Esq."

TO JOHN FORSTER.

[1833.]

"My dear Boy,—Scamper off with this to Dilke,[3] and get it in for tomorrow; then we shall have two things in in the first week. "Your laureat,

[No signature.]

[1] [The Prologue follows on a folio leaf in the Forster volume in the S. K. Museum.]

[2] [With acrostics on Mary and Sarah Locke.]

[3] [A contribution for the "Athenæum." From Dilke Lamb occasionally at this time borrowed books, and there is one short letter addressed to him, in which Lamb solicits a loan of this sort, and, after thanking him for offering to lend, goes on to say, "*Do not fear sending too many.* But do not, if it be irksome to yourself, such as shall make you say, 'Damn it, here's Lamb's box come again.' *Dogs' leaves ensured.*" The writer would like any light stuff—novels of last two years, or further back—nonsense of any period, but no useful learning, &c. In a playful note to the printer of Dilke's paper, probably written in 1833, he deprecates unnecessary fuss over trifles in his contributions, and tells him that he has read the proof in hand five and forty times over, and submitted it to his Edmonton friends, and he at last detected a superfluous dash. "I can well trust your editor," he says, "when I don't see queer phrases, which prove themselves wrong by creating a distrust in the sober compositor."]

With the exception of the letter to Kenney, written after the visit to Paris in 1822, there is no trace in the correspondence of the accomplished and agreeable author of "Sweethearts and Wives," beyond a little note to him from Edmonton, promising to see his play at the first opportunity, and asking for orders for the lady, who acted as Miss Lamb's nurse in her illnesses.

TO JAMES KENNEY.

"Dear Kn,—I will not see London again without seeing your pleasant Play. In meanwhile, pray send three or four orders to a lady who can't afford to pay, Miss James, No. 1, Grove Road, Lisson Grove, Paddington, a day or two before, & come & see us some Evening with my hitherto uncorrupted & honest bookseller Moxon.

"C. LAMB."

Lamb's latter days were brightened by the periodical hospitality of the admirable translator of Dante at the British Museum. The following was addressed to this old friend, while Mr. and Mrs. Moxon were on their wedding tour:—

TO REV. H. F. CARY.

"Sept. 9th, 1833.

"Dear Sir,—Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is flaunting it about *à la Parisienne* with his new bride, our Emma, much to his satisfaction and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you return from Worcestershire and most most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here or anywhere.

"I will take my time with Darley's act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the English typography.

"Yours, most truly,

"C. LAMB.

"P.S.—Pray let me know when you return.[1] We are at

[1] [Mr. Cary was about to take his annual holiday.]

Mr. Walden's, Church-street, Edmonton; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the 'Inferno' by the blessed furtherance of your polar-star translation. I think we scarce left anything unmadeout. But our partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your Dante and Sandys' Ovid are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

"Fairfax's Tasso is no translation at all. It's better in some places; but it merely observes the number of stanzas; as for images, similes, &c., he finds 'em himself, and never 'troubles Peter for the matter.'

"In haste, dear Cary, yours ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Has Moxon sent you 'Elia,' second volume? if not, he shall. Taylor and we are at law about it."[1]

Lamb had arranged to dine with Cary every third Wednesday in the month at the Museum. A deviation from the rules of temperance on one of these occasions is deplored in the following letter.[2]

TO MR. CARY.

[Southampton Buildings, October, 1833.]

"I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality, which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house, say a merchant's or a manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's or greengrocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of Parliament's, a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity. But to be seen deliberately to go out

[1] [On account, presumably, of the papers from the old "London Magazine," Taylor and Hessey's copyright, inserted in it. In a letter to Hone, of March 6, 1833, Lamb states that Taylor had taken out an injunction.]

[2] [Compare a letter to Walter Wilson, of August 14, 1801, and to Cary himself (still more remarkable) of June 10, 1828. In both cases the estrangement was only momentary.]

of the house of a clergyman drunk! a clergyman of the Church of England too! not that alone, but of an expounder of that dark Italian Hierophant, an exposition little short of *his* who dared unfold the Apocalypse: divine riddles both and (without supernal grace vouchsafed) Arks not to be fingered without present blasting to the touchers. And, then, from what house! Not a common glebe or vicarage (which yet had been shameful), but from a kingly repository of sciences, human and divine, with the primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better! With feverish eyes on the succeeding dawn I opened upon the faint light, enough to distinguish, in a strange chamber not immediately to be recognised, garters, hose, waistcoat, neckerchief, arranged in dreadful order and proportion, which I knew was not mine own. 'Tis the common symptom, on awaking, I judge my last night's condition from. A tolerable scattering on the floor I hail as being too probably my own, and if the candlestick be not removed, I assoil myself. But this finical arrangement, this finding everything in the morning in exact diametrical rectitude, torments me. By whom was I divested? Burning blushes! not by the fair hands of nymphs, the Buffam Graces? Remote whispers suggested that I *coached* it home in triumph—far be that from working pride in me, for I was unconscious of the locomotion—that a young Mentor accompanied a reprobate old Telemachus; that, the Trojan like, he bore his charge upon his shoulders, while the wretched incubus, in glimmering sense, hiccuped drunken snatches of flying on the bats' wings after sunset. An aged servitor was also hinted at, to make disgrace more complete: one, to whom my ignominy may offer further occasions of revolt (to which he was before too fondly inclining) from the true faith; for, at a sight of my helplessness, what more was needed to drive him to the advocacy of independency? Occasion led me through Great Russell Street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker. My feeble hands in vain essayed to lift it. I dreaded that Argus Portitor, who doubtless lanterned me out on that prodigious night. I called the Elginian

marbles. They were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding say without fear of thrusting back, in a light but a peremptory air, 'I am going to Mr. Cary's.' I passed by the walls of Balclutha. I had imaged to myself a zodiac of third Wednesdays irradiating by glimpses the Edmonton dulness. I dreamed of Highmore! I am de-vited to come on Wednesdays. Villanous old age that, with second childhood, brings linked hand in hand her inseparable twin, new inexperience, which knows not effects of liquor. Where I was to have sate for a sober, middle-aged-and-a-half-gentleman, literary too, the neat-fingered artist can educe no notions but of a dissolute Silenus, lecturing natural philosophy to a jeering Chromius or a Mnasilus. Pudet. From the context gather the lost name of ——."

The following is Lamb's reply to a welcome communication of Sonnets, addressed by Moxon to his young wife :—

TO MR. MOXON.

"Nov. 29th, 1833.

"Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these Sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty! I have only allowed myself to transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be from any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four lines in the room of the four last. Read 'Darby and Joan,' in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation!) before the dark days shall come, in which ye shall say 'there is small comfort in them.' You have begun a sort of character of Emma in them very sweetly; carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

"I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be damn'd if I furnish a line towards it. So much for that. The next best is,

'To the Ocean.

'Ye gallant winds, if e'er your lusty cheeks
Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,
O, puff your loudest, spread the canvas wide,'

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

"Perhaps 'O Ocean' (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels, which Pope objects to. 'Great Ocean!' is obvious. To save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble Sonnet. 'St. Cloud' I have no fault to find with.

"If I return the Sonnets, think it no disrespect; for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice 'em earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental cogitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour-street, &c., when diabolically I was interrupted by

Heigh-ho!
Little Barrow!—

Emma knows him—and prevailed on to spend the day at his sister's, where was an album, and (O march of intellect!) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles' play which, epilogued by me, lay on the Piano, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home, I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

'Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,'

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them till next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris.[1] Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters

[1] [The residence of Miss Maria Fryer, Mrs. Moxon's old schoolfellow, in Cambridgeshire.]

triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you could come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you! Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on Mary's birthday. Love to the whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so from her loving uncle, as she has let me call myself. I bought a fine embossed card yesterday, and wrote for the Pawnbrokeress's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forget the rest—but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband) :—

'May your fame
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name!'

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E."

The letter to Miss Brown, alluded to in the last, was doubtless written a day or two before; but it seemed desirable to let it follow that, in which it is partly elucidated. As the young lady married Mr. White, and went out to India, her husband was not improbably (though he speaks of him as Mr. White), a son of Edward White, Lamb's old colleague in Leadenhall Street, through whom he may have become acquainted with the Browns. But they were clearly friends of some standing, and the question arises, whether they were connected with the Brown, "or Pijon, as he is called by the moderns," mentioned in a letter from Lamb to Manning of 1805-6.[1] The writer's reference to curling and clipping below can only be explained by the supposition that Lamb, instead of using his embossed card for the verses, wrote them on the same unusually large folio paper on which the letter itself occurs.

TO MISS FRANCES BROWN.

[Church Street, Edmonton, November, 1833.]

"Dear Frances,[2]—Will you accept these poor lines, & curl them into your album, clipping the corners? They

[1] [See vol. i., p. 355.] [2] [Now first printed.]

will cost you threepence,[1] which your aunt Mary will pay you, & then she will owe me ninepence, from the old shilling she lost, as she says, in the sawpit. My sister joins me in remembces to you all. "C. LAMB.

"I hope your sweetheart's name is WHITE. Else it will spoil all. May be 'tis Black. Then we must alter it. And may your fortunes BLACKEN with your name."

[Endorsed:]

"Miss Frances Brown,
"Gray's Inn Lane,
"At the corner of Wilson Street."

The following is Lamb's letter of acknowledgment to the author of the "Pleasures of Memory," for an early copy of the second illustrated edition of his Poems, 1833, of a share in the publication of which Mr. Moxon was "justly vain." The artistic allusions are to Stothard; the poet's own kindnesses need no explanation to those who have been enabled by circumstances to become acquainted with the generous course of his life.

TO MR. ROGERS.

"Dec. 1833.

"My dear Sir,—Your book, by the unremitting punctuality of your publisher, has reached me thus early. I have not opened it, nor will till to-morrow, when I promise myself a thorough reading of it. The 'Pleasures of Memory' was the first school-present I made to Mrs. Moxon; it has those nice woodcuts, and I believe she keeps it still. Believe me, that all the kindness you have shown to the husband of that excellent person seems done unto myself. I have tried my hand at a sonnet in the 'Times.' But the turn I gave it, though I hoped it would not displease you, I thought might not be equally agreeable to your artist. I met that dear old man at poor Henry's[2] with you, and again at Cary's; and it was sublime to see him sit, deaf, and enjoy

[1] [The postage from Edmonton.]

[2] [Henry Rogers, brother of the poet. Compare letters to Moxon of May 12, 1830, and August, 1831.]

all that was going on in mirth with the company. He reposed upon the many graceful, many fantastic images he had created; with them he dined and took wine. I have ventured at an antagonist copy of verses in the 'Athenæum' to *him*, in which he is as everything, and you as nothing. He is no lawyer who cannot take two sides. But I am jealous of the combination of the sister arts. Let them sparkle apart. What injury (short of the theatres) did not Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery do me with Shakspeare? to have Opie's Shakspeare, Northcote's Shakspeare, light-headed Fuseli's Shakspeare, heavy-headed Romney's Shakspeare, wooden-headed West's Shakspeare (though he did the best in Lear), deaf-headed Reynolds's Shakspeare, instead of my and everybody's Shakspeare; to be tied down to an authentic face of Juliet! to have Imogen's portrait! to confine the illimitable! I like you and Stothard (you best), but 'out upon this half-faced fellowship!' Sir, when I have read the book, I may trouble you, through Moxon, with some faint criticisms. It is not the flatteringest compliment in a letter to an author to say, you have not read his book yet. But the devil of a reader he must be, who prances through it in five minutes; and no longer have I received the parcel. It was a little tantalising to me to receive a letter from Landor, *Gebir* Landor, from Florence, to say he was just sitting down to read my 'Elia,' just received: but the letter was to go out before the reading. There are calamities in authorship which only authors know. I am going to call on Moxon on Monday, if the throng of carriages in Dover-street, on the morn of publication, do not barricade me out.

"With many thanks and most respectful remembrances to your sister, "Yours, "C. LAMB.

"Have you seen Coleridge's happy exemplification in English of the Ovidian Elegiac metre?

> "In the Hexameter rises the fountain's silvery current,
> In the Pentameter aye falling in melody down.

"My sister is papering up the book, careful soul!"

He had not lost his thoughtful consideration for literary

friends, and remembered that Forster was at work on Edmund Kean when he met someone in the course of his rambles about Edmonton, who had known Kean, and gave the name of an acquaintance who knew that great actor yet better than himself.

TO MR. MOXON.

"[Edmonton], Jan. 28, 1834.

"I met with a man at my half-way house, who told me many anecdotes of Kean's younger life. He knew him thoroughly. His name is Wyatt, living near the Bell, Edmonton. Also he referred me to West, a publican opposite St. George's Church, Southwark, who knew him *more* intimately. Is it worth Forster's while to enquire after them? "C. L.

"E. Moxon, Esq.,
"Dover Street,
"Piccadilly."

CHAPTER XXI.

LETTERS TO MISS FRYER, WORDSWORTH, CARY, ETC.—DEATH OF COLERIDGE—LAST LETTERS—THE MEETING AT TALFOURD'S BETWEEN LAMB AND SOME OF HIS SURVIVING ASSOCIATES.

[1834.]

LAMB and his sister were now, for the last year of their united lives, always together. What his feelings were in this companionship, when his beloved associate was deprived of reason, will be seen in the following most affecting letter to an old schoolfellow and very dear friend of Mrs. Moxon's—long since dead—who took an earnest interest in their welfare.

TO MISS MARIA FRYER.

"Feb. 14, 1834.

"Dear Miss Fryer,—Your letter found me just returned from keeping my birthday (pretty innocent!) at Dover-street. I see them pretty often. I have since had letters of business to write, or should have replied earlier. In one word, be less uneasy about me; I bear my privations very well; I am not in the depths of desolation, as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned upon me again, and thousands from the ten

years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally lives again (every important thing and every trifle) in her brain with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens as a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me; for I have nobody to tell these things to now. Emma, I see, has got a harp! and is learning to play. She has framed her three Walton pictures, and pretty they look. That is a book you should read; such sweet religion in it—next to Woolman's! though the subject be baits and hooks, and worms, and fishes. She has my copy at present to do two more from.

"Very, very tired, I began this epistle, having been epistolising all the morning, and very kindly would I end it, could I find adequate expressions to your kindness. We did set our minds on seeing you in spring. One of us will indubitably. But I am not skilled in almanac learning, to know when spring precisely begins and ends. Pardon my blots; I am glad you like your book. I wish it had been half as worthy of your acceptance as 'John Woolman.'[1] But 'tis a good-natured book."

A few days afterwards Lamb's passionate desire to help a most deserving friend broke out in the following earnest little letter, which possesses the additional interest of being the last addressed to Wordsworth.

TO MR. WORDSWORTH.

"Church Street, Edmonton.
"Feb. 22, 1834.

"Dear Wordsworth,—I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's crea-

[1] [See the letter of Jan. 5, 1797. "Woolman's Journal" was a very old acquaintance.]

tures, I believe) is establishing a school at Carlisle; her name is Louisa Martin,[1] her address, 75, Castle-street, Carlisle; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and on her behaviour I would stake my soul. O, if you can recommend her, how would I love you!—if I could love you better! Pray, pray, recommend her. She is as good a human creature,—next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short, I may call her half dead to me. How good you are to me. Yours with fervour of friendship, for ever, "C. L.

"If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. Louisa's sister (as good as she: she cannot be better though she tries) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsôme annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock."

The next communication to Forster is unusually characteristic. We perceive from it that, although his correspondence with Allsop has apparently ceased, he still sees or hears from him; and he also enunciates pretty freely his doctrine of strict neutrality between fallen-out friends.

TO JOHN FORSTER.

"[Edmonton] June 25, 1834.

"D^r F.—I simply sent for the Miltons, because Allsop has some books of mine, and I thought they might travel with them. But keep 'em as much longer as you like. I never trouble my head with other people's quarrels. I do not always understand my own. I seldom see them in Dover-street. I know as little as the Man in the Moon about your joint transactions, & care as little. If you have lost a little portion of my good will, it is that you do not

[1] [Compare the letter to Miss Martin of July 10, 1830. She was then living at Chelsea with her family. See also vol. i., pp. 359, 370.]

come & see me. Arrange with Procter, when you have done with your moving accidents.

"Yours Ambulaturus,
"C. L.

"John Forster, Esq.,
"4, Burton Street,
"Burton Crescent."

Lamb was entirely destitute of what is commonly called "a taste for music." A few old tunes ran in his head; now and then the expression of a sentiment, though never of song, touched him with rare and exquisite delight; and Braham in his youth,[1] Miss Rennell, who died too soon, and who used to sing the charming air, "In infancy our hopes and fears,"[2] and Miss Burrell, won his ear and his heart. But usually music only confused him, and an opera —to which he once or twice tried to accompany Miss Isola —was to him a maze of sound in which he almost lost his wits. But he did not, therefore, take less pleasure in the success of Miss Clara Novello, to whom he addressed the following lines.[3]

"To Clara Novello.

"The Gods have made me most unmusical,
With feelings that respond not to the call
Of stringed harp, or voice—obtuse and mute
To hautboy, sackbut, dulcimer, and flute;
King David's lyre, that made the madness flee
From Saul, had been but a jew's-harp to me:
Theorbos, violins, French horns, guitars,
Leave in my wounded ears inflicted scars;
I hate those trills, and shakes, and sounds that float
Upon the captive air; I know no note,
Nor ever shall, whatever folks may say,
Of the strange mysteries of *Sol* and *Fa*;
I sit at oratorios like a fish,
Incapable of sound, and only wish
The thing was over. Yet do I admire,
O tuneful daughter of a tuneful sire,
Thy painful labours in a science, which
To your deserts I pray may make you rich

[1] [See the letter to Manning of January 2nd, 1810.]

[2] [Probably "the Kate with nine stars, though she is but one," of the letter just cited, where Miss Burrell of the Olympic is also mentioned.]

[3] ["Athenæum," for July 25, 1834.]

As much as you are loved, and add a grace
To the most musical Novello race.
Women lead men by the nose, some cynics say;
You draw them by the ear—a delicater way.
"C. LAMB."

He had now to sustain the severest of his losses. After a long and painful illness—borne with an heroic patience which concealed the intensity of his sufferings from the bystanders—Coleridge died.[1] As in the instance of Hazlitt, Lamb did not feel the immediate blow so acutely as he himself expected. But the calamity sank deep into his mind, and was, I believe, seldom far from his thoughts. It had been arranged that the attendance at the funeral should be confined to the family of the departed poet and philosopher, and Lamb therefore was spared the misery of going through the dismal ceremony of mourning. For the first week he forbore to write; but at its close he addressed the following short letter to one of the family of him whom he once so justly denominated Coleridge's "more than friend."

TO THE REV. JAMES GILMAN.

[August 4, 1834.]

"My dear Sir,—The sad week being over, I must write to you to say, that I was glad of being spared from attending; I have no words to express my feeling with you all. I can only say that when you think a short visit from me would be acceptable, when your father and mother shall be able to see me *with comfort*, I will come to the bereaved house. Express to them my tenderest regards and hopes that they will continue our friends still. We both love and respect them as much as a human being can, and finally thank them with our hearts for what they have been to the poor departed.

"God bless you all. "C. LAMB.

"Mr. Walden's,
"Church Street, Edmonton."

[1] [On the 25th July, 1834—the day on which the verses to Miss Novello appeared in the "Athenæum." In the concluding letter to Allsop, in the last week of July, 1833, Lamb had pleaded a pressure of engagements in connection with Miss Isola's marriage as a reason for

Shortly after, assured that his presence would be welcome, Lamb went to Highgate. There he asked leave to see the nurse who had attended upon Coleridge; and being struck and affected by the feeling she manifested towards his friend, insisted on her receiving five guineas from him,—a gratuity which seemed almost incomprehensible to the poor woman, but which Lamb could not help giving as an immediate expression of his own gratitude. From her he learned the effort by which Coleridge had suppressed the expression of his sufferings, and the discovery affected him even more than the news of his death. He would startle his friends sometimes by suddenly exclaiming, "Coleridge is dead!" and then pass on to common themes, having obtained the momentary relief of his oppressed spirits.

A quiet dinner at the British Museum with Mr. Cary once a month, to which Lamb looked forward with almost boyish eagerness, was now almost his only festival. This enjoyment had been interrupted by Mr. Cary's visit to the Continent:—

TO MR. CARY.[1]

"Sept. 12, 1834.

"By Cot's plessing we will not be absence at the grace.

"Dear C.,—We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelburg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish and poignant Moselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen nor tasted any of these things.

"Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books and Bibliothecæ.

"C. and M. Lamb.

"I have only got your note just now *per negligentiam periniqui Moxoni.*"

not visiting Highgate. Nor does he seem to have seen Coleridge before his death. The latest extant letter to the man whom in 1796 he described as his dearest and only friend, is that of April 14, 1832.]

[1] ["Memoir of H. F. Cary," by his son, 1847, p. 278.]

After Miss Isola's marriage, Lamb and his sister remained at Edmonton within reach of Enfield and its pleasant walks; and Lamb, for his part, continued regularly visiting London and dining with Mr. Cary on every third Wednesday. The following notelet is in answer to a letter enclosing a list of candidates for a Widows' Fund Society, for which Lamb was entitled to vote.

TO MR. CARY.

"Oct. 18, 1834.

"Dear Sir,—The unbounded range of munificence presented to my choice staggers me. What can twenty votes do for one hundred and two widows? I cast my eyes hopeless among the viduage. N.B. Southey[1] might be ashamed of himself to let his aged mother stand at the top of the list, with his £100 a year and butt of sack. Sometimes I sigh over No. 12, Mrs. Carve-ill, some poor relation of mine, no doubt. No. 15 has my wishes; but then she is a Welsh one. I have Ruth upon No. 21. I'd tug hard for No. 24. No. 25 is an anomaly: there can be no Mrs. Hogg. No. 34 ensnares me. No. 73 should not have met so foolish a person. No. 92 may bob it as she likes; but she catches no cherry of me. So I have even fixed at haphazard, as you'll see.

"Yours, every third Wednesday,

"C. L."

He continued, to the last, these monthly visits to Mr. Cary, and was ready to write an acrostic or a complimentary epigram at the suggestion of any friend. The following is the last of his effusions in verse:—

"TO MARGARET W——.

"Margaret, in happy hour
Christen'd from that humble flower
Which we a daisy[2] call!
May thy pretty namesake be
In all things a type of thee,
And image thee in all.

[1] *A* Mrs. Southey headed the inclosed list.
[2] Marguerite, in French, signifies a daisy.

"Like *it* you show a modest face,
An unpretending native grace;—
The tulip and the pink,
The china and the damask rose,
And every flaunting flower that blows,
In the comparing shrink.

"Of lowly fields you think no scorn,
Yet gayest gardens would adorn,
And grace wherever set.
Home-seated in your lonely bower,
Or wedded—a transplanted flower—
I bless you, Margaret!

"CHARLES LAMB.

"Edmonton, Oct. 8th, 1834."

Coleridge had been dead many months, but he was still in the thoughts of his old friend. One of the last pieces of writing which Lamb composed was a contribution which he had been asked by a common acquaintance to make to the album of Mr. James Keymer,[1] a gentleman who had married the sister of Laman Blanchard, and who shared with his wife earnest literary sympathies; and the lines were upon the theme nearest the writer's heart.

"When I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world—that he had a hunger for eternity. I grieved then that I could not grieve. But since I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books without an ineffectual turning and reference to him . . . . He was my fifty years' friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died in more passionately than when he lived. . . . . What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel. CHAS. LAMB. Edmonton, November 21, 1834."

Coleridge, by his will, dated from Highgate, September 17th, 1829, left mourning rings to several of his friends,

[1] [A most liberal and kind-hearted man, whom I thoroughly well remember. He was the father of the late Mrs. Charles Heaton, and at his house I used to meet Kenny Meadows, Blanchard Jerrold, James Hannay, and other literary folk. Keymer himself was a Manchester warehouseman in the City.]

and foremost to Lamb, with these words: "To my oldest friend and ever-beloved schoolfellow, Charles Lamb; and in the deep and almost lifelong affection, of which this is the slender record, his equally beloved sister, Mary Lamb, will know herself to be included."

A present of game, from an unknown admirer, produced the following acknowledgment in the "Athenæum" of November 30th, 1834:—

THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, ETC.

"We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy;* to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum;' to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is methinks *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it."—*Last Essays of Elia.*

"Elia presents his acknowledgments to his 'Correspondent unknown,' for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be a reader of the 'Athenæum,' else he had meditated a notice in the 'Times.' Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for: pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown, with gravy and melted butter!—old Mr. Chambers, the sensible clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia,[1] used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was overdoing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of 'Jug, Jug, Jug,' Elia pronounces that a hare, to be

[1] [Mr. C. Chambers, of Leamington, to whom two letters from Lamb are noticed in their places. See vol. ii., pp. 30, 41.]

truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so 'crips,' as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste—that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents—good, but mistaken men—in consequence of their erroneous supposition, that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*) but for some subtle analogy between the delicate flavour of the latter and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madnesses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase of modern usage. 'Tis true the hare is the most circumspect of animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise, which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble will I call her, in spite of her detractors, who from occasional demonstrations of the principle of self-preservation (common to all animals), infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen, with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three counties; and because the well-flavoured beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord—comes the grave naturalist—Linnæus perchance, or Buffon, and gravely sets down the hare as a—timid animal. Why, Achilles or Bully Dawson would have declined the preposterous combat.

"In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare! How tender its processes after swallowing! What chyle it promotes! How ethereal! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare than a cursory thanks to the country 'good Unknown.' The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than "ELIA."

In December, 1834, Mr. Lamb received a letter from a gentleman, a stranger to him,—Mr. Childs of Bungay, whose copy of "Elia" had been sent on an oriental voyage, and who, in order to replace it, applied to Mr. Lamb. The following is his reply:—

TO MR. CHILDS.[1]

"Monday. Church Street, EDMONTON, (not Enfield, as you erroneously direct yours).

"Dear Sir,—The volume which you seem to want, is not to be had for love or money. I with difficulty procured a copy for myself. Yours is gone to enlighten the tawny Hindoos. What a supreme felicity to the author (only he is no traveller) on the Ganges or Hydaspes (Indian streams) to meet a smutty Gentoo ready to burst with laughing at the tale of Bo-Bo! for doubtless it hath been translated into all the dialects of the East. I grieve the less, that Europe should want it. I cannot gather from your letter, whether you are aware that a second series of the Essays is published by Moxon, in Dover-street, Piccadilly, called 'The Last Essays of Elia,' and, I am told, is not inferior to the former. Shall I order a copy for you, and will you accept it? Shall I *lend* you, at the same time, my sole copy of the former volume (Oh! return it) for a month or two? In return, you shall favour me with the loan of one of those Norfolk-bred grunters that you laud so highly; I promise not to keep it above a day. What a funny name Bungay is![2] I never dreamt of a correspondent thence. I

[1] [Mr. Robert Childs, of Bungay, is mentioned in Hone's "Every-Day Book," i. 1354, as an ingenious gentleman, who etched a portrait of a celebrated Norfolk character, Mrs. Hannah Want, who died at Ditchingham in her 106th year, as it was said. Lamb's friends mustered rather strongly in East Anglia. Besides Mr. Childs, there were Manning, Barton and Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Paris of Cambridge, and Mr. and Mrs. Williams of Bury. Mr. Childs had a printing business at Bungay, which, since his death several years ago, has passed into the hands of Messrs. Clay.]

[2] [Some one has remarked, "had Lamb never heard of the 'Black Dog of Bungay?'" But it is certainly odd that he should not have recollected Robert Greene's drama of "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,"

used to think of it as some Utopian town or borough in Gotham land. I now believe in its existence, as part of merry England.

[Here are some lines scratched out.]

The part I have scratched out is the best of the letter. Let me have your commands.

"CH. LAMB, *alias* ELIA."

The following little note has a mournful interest, as Lamb's last scrap of writing. It is addressed to the wife of his oldest surviving friend:—

TO MRS. DYER.

"Dec. 22nd, 1834.

"Dear Mrs. Dyer,—I am very uneasy about a *Book* which I either have lost or left at your house on Thursday. It was the book I went to fetch from Miss Buffam's, while the tripe was frying. It is called Phillip's Theatrum Poetarum; but it is an English book. I think I left it in the parlour. It is Mr. Cary's book, and I would not lose it for the world.[1] Pray, if you find it, book it at the Swan, Snow Hill, by an Edmonton stage immediately, directed to Mr. Lamb, Church-street, Edmonton, or write to say you cannot find it. I am quite anxious about it. If it is lost, I shall never like tripe again.

"With kindest love to Mr. Dyer and all,

"Yours truly, "C. LAMB."

A few days after the letter to Mrs. Dyer, which referred to a book lent to Lamb by Mr. Cary, was written, an accident befell the writer, which seemed trifling at first, but which terminated in a fatal issue. In taking his daily morning walk on the London road as far as the inn where John Gilpin's ride is pictured, he stumbled against a stone, fell, and slightly injured his face. The wounds seemed

which latter name was doubtless suggested to the poet by his East Anglian extraction.]

[1] In his "Memoirs" of his father (1847, p. 279) Henry Cary says: "Lamb had borrowed of my father Phillip's 'Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum,' which was returned by Lamb's friend, Mr. Moxon, with the leaf folded down at the account of Sir Philip Sydney."

healing, when erysipelas in the head came on, and he sank beneath the disease, happily without pain. On Friday evening Mr. Ryle, of the India House, who had been appointed co-executor with me of his will some years before, called on me, and informed me that he was in danger. I went over to Edmonton on the following morning, and found him very weak, and nearly insensible to things passing around him. Now and then a few words were audible, from which it seemed that his mind, in its feebleness, was intent on kind and hospitable thoughts. Mr. Childs had sent a present of a turkey, instead of the suggested pig; and the broken sentences which could be heard, were of some meeting of friends to partake of it. I do not think he knew me; and having vainly tried to engage his attention, I quitted him, not believing his death so near at hand. In less than an hour afterwards, his voice gradually grew fainter, as he still murmured the names of Moxon, Procter, and some other old friends, and he sank into death as placidly as into sleep,[1] on the 27th of December,[2] 1834. On the following Saturday his remains were laid in a deep grave in Edmonton churchyard, made in a spot which, about a fortnight before, he had pointed out to his sister, on an afternoon wintry walk, as the place where he wished to be buried.

[1] [In Robinson's "Diary," 1869, iii., p. 57, occurs a very interesting letter from Talfourd to Robinson, 31 December, 1834, respecting Lamb's last moments and his changed appearance after death.]

[2] [It is singular that he should have gone, after all, in that season which he had been accustomed so long to dread. In one letter he says: "Vanity will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects, and impute it to the wintry solstice." And again elsewhere:—'In winter, this intolerable disinclination to dying—to give its mildest name—does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then are we as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me, puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial, wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity, moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearances,—that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles:—I am none of her minions—I hold with the Persian." A cold *hypocritical* May gets its full measure of malediction in his first extant note to Novello in 1826.]

So died, in the sixtieth year of his age, one of the most remarkable and amiable men who have ever lived. Few of his numerous friends were aware of his illness before they heard of his death; and, until that illness seized him, he had appeared so little changed by time, so likely to continue for several years, and he was so intimately associated with every-day engagements and feelings, that the news was as strange as it was mournful. When the first sad surprise was over, several of his friends strove to do justice to their own recollections of him; and articles upon his character and writings, all written out of the heart, appeared from Mr. Procter[1] in the "Athenæum," from Mr. Forster in the "New Monthly Magazine," from Mr. Patmore in the "Court Magazine," and from Mr. Moxon in Leigh Hunt's "London Journal," besides others whose authors are unknown to me; and subsequently many affectionate allusions, from pens which his own had inspired, have been gleaned out in various passages of almost every periodical work of reputation. The "Recollections of Coleridge" by Mr. Allsop also breathed the spirit of admiration for his elevated genius, which the author—one whom Lamb held in the highest esteem for himself and for his devotion to Coleridge—had for years expressed both in his words and in deeds. But it is not possible for the subtlest characteristic power, even when animated by the warmest

[1] ["If ever there was a man in whom 'the elements' were delightfully, although strangely mixed—in whom the minor foibles and finer virtues of our nature were bound up together intimately—inextricably, it was surely he. They were deep-rooted, and twined together, beyond all chance of separation. Yet these foibles were, for the most part, so small, and were grafted so curiously upon a strong, original mind, that we would scarcely have desired them away. They were a sort of fret-work, which let in light, and showed the form and order of his character. 'We knew him, Horatio'—and having known him, it seems idle to say how truly and deeply we deplore his loss. Who, in truth, that had been his intimate, could speak of him but with affection and reverence? His prejudices, which were rather humours than grave opinions,—his weaknesses, which never hurt one human being except himself—may sometimes have been talked of—by strangers. But it was the pride of his *friends*, that they had opportunities of seeing deeper into his heart, and could feel and avouch for his many virtues. As a man, he was gentle—sincere—benevolent—modest—charitable towards others—beyond most men. In the *large* sense of the word, he was eminently 'humane.'"—PROCTER.]

personal regard, to give to those who never had the privilege of his companionship an idea of what Lamb was. There was an apparent contradiction in him, which seemed an inconsistency between thoughts closely associated, and which was in reality nothing but the contradiction of his genius and his fortune, fantastically exhibiting itself in different aspects, which close intimacy could alone appreciate. He would startle you with the finest perception of truth, separating by a phrase the real from a tissue of conventional falsehoods, and the next moment, by some whimsical invention, make you "doubt truth to be a liar." He would touch the inmost pulse of profound affection, and then break off in some jest, which would seem profane "to ears polite," but carry as profound a meaning to those who had the right key, as his most pathetic suggestions; and where he loved and doted most, he would vent the overflowing of his feelings in words that looked like rudeness. He touches on this strange resource of love in his "Farewell to Tobacco," in a passage which may explain some startling freedoms with those he himself loved most dearly.

—— "Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplext lovers use,
At a need, when in despair,
To paint forth the fairest fair;
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike;
And, instead of 'dearest Miss,'
Jewel, honey, sweetheart, bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her cockatrice and siren,
Basilisk, and all that's evil,
Witch, hyena, mermaid, devil,
Ethiop, wench, and blackamoor,
Monkey, ape, and twenty more;
Friendly traitress, loving foe,—
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not."

Thus, in the very excess of affection to his sister, whom

he loved above all else on earth, he would sometimes address to her some words of seeming reproach, yet so tinged with a humorous irony that none but an entire stranger could mistake his drift. His anxiety for her health, even in his most convivial moments, was unceasing. If, in company, he perceived she looked languid, he would repeatedly ask her, "Mary, does your head ache?" "Don't you feel unwell?" and would be satisfied by none of her gentle assurances, that his fears were groundless. He was always afraid of her sensibilities being too deeply engaged, and if in her presence any painful accident or history was discussed, he would turn the conversation with some desperate joke. Miss Betham, author of the "Lay of Marie," which Lamb esteemed one of the most graceful and truly feminine works in a literature rich in female genius, has reminded me of the trait in some recollections of Lamb, with which she has furnished me; she relates that once, when she was speaking to Miss Lamb of Charles, and in her earnestness Miss Lamb had laid her hand kindly on the eulogist's shoulder, he came up hastily and interrupted them, saying, "Come, come, we must not talk sentimentally," and took up the conversation in his gayest strain.

CHAPTER XXII.

LAST DINNER AT TALFOURD'S—LAMB'S READING, HABITS, AND OPINIONS—WORDSWORTH'S EPITAPH.

A SHORT time only before Lamb's fatal illness, he yielded to my urgent importunity, and met a small party of his friends at dinner at my house, where we had provided for him some of the few articles of food which now seemed to hit his fancy, and among them the hare, which had supplanted pig in his just esteem, with the hope of exciting his very delicate appetite. We were not disappointed; he ate with a relish not usual with him of late years, and passed the evening in his happiest mood. Among the four or five who met him on this occasion, the last on which I saw him in health, were Mr. Barron Field, Mr. Procter, and Mr. Forster. Mr. Field, in a memoir of Lamb in the "Annual Biography and Obituary" of 1836, has brought this evening vividly to recollection; and I have a melancholy satisfaction in quoting a passage from it as he has recorded it. After justly eulogizing Lamb's sense of "The Virtue of Suppression in Writing," Mr. Field proceeds:—

"We remember, at the very last supper we ate with him, he quoted a passage from Prior's 'Henry and Emma,' illustrative of this discipline; and yet he said that he loved Prior as much as any man, but that his 'Henry and Emma' was a vapid paraphrase of the old poem of 'The Nut-brown Maid.' For example, at the *dénouement* of the ballad Prior makes Henry rant out to his devoted Emma—

> 'In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
> Illustrious Earl; him terrible in war.
> Let Loire confess, for she has felt his sword,
> And trembling fled before the British lord.'

And so on for a dozen couplets—heroic, as they are called. And then Mr. Lamb made us mark the modest simplicity

with which the noble youth discloses himself to his mistress in the old poem :—

'Now, understand,
To Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage,
(in a parenthesis, as it were),
I will you bring,
And with a ring,
By way of marriage,
I will you take,
And lady make,
As shortly as I can.
So have you won
An Earle's son,
And not a banish'd man.'

"How he loved those old rhymes, and with what justice!"

Many of Lamb's witty and curious sayings have been repeated since his death, and are worthy to be held in undying remembrance; but they give no idea of the general tenor of his conversation, which was far more singular and delightful in the traits which could never be recalled, than in the epigrammatic turns which it is possible to quote. It was fretted into perpetual eddies of verbal felicity and happy thought, with little tranquil intervals reflecting images of exceeding elegance and grace. He sometimes poured out puns in startling succession; sometimes curiously contrived a train of sentences to introduce the catastrophe of a pun which, in that case, was often startling from its own demerit. At Mr. Cary's, one day, he introduced and kept up an elaborate dissertation on the various uses and abuses of the word *nice;* and when its variations were exhausted, showed what he had been driving at by exclaiming, "Well! now we have held a Council of Nice." "A pun," said he in a letter to Coleridge, in which he eulogised the Odes and Addresses of his friends Hood and Reynolds, "is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a makeweight. You shall read one of the Addresses twice over and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good, or better, than when you discover them. A pun is a noble thing *per se.* O, never bring it in as an accessory! A pun is a sole digest of reflection (vide my 'Aids' to that awaking from a savage state); it

is entire; it fills the mind; it is as perfect as a sonnet—better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of humour. It knows it should have an establishment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day; I forget which it was." Indeed, Lamb's choicest puns and humorous expressions could not be recollected. They were born of the evanescent feeling, and died with it—"one moment *bright*, then gone for ever." The shocks of pleasurable surprise were so rapid in succession, and the thoughts suggested so new, that one destroyed the other, and left only the sense of delight behind. Frequently as I had the happiness of seeing him during twenty years, I can add nothing from my own store of recollection to those which have been collected by others, and those I will abstain from repeating, so vapid would be their effect when printed compared to that which they produced when, stammered out, they gave to the moment its victory.

It cannot be denied or concealed that Lamb's excellences, moral and intellectual, were blended with a single frailty, so intimately associating itself with all that was most charming in the one, and sweetest in the other that, even if it were right to withdraw it wholly from notice, it would be impossible without it to do justice to his virtues. The eagerness with which he would quaff exciting liquors from an early period of life, proved that to a physical peculiarity of constitution was to be ascribed, in the first instance, the strength of the temptation with which he was assailed. This kind of corporeal need: the struggles of deep thought to overcome the bashfulness and the impediment of speech which obstructed its utterance: the dull, heavy, irksome labours which hung heavy on his mornings, and dried up his spirits; and still more, the sorrows which had environed him, and which prompted him to snatch a fearful joy; and the unbounded craving after sympathy with human feelings—conspired to disarm his power of resisting, when the means of indulgence were actually before him. Great exaggerations have been prevalent on this subject, countenanced, no doubt, by the "Confessions" which, in the prodigality of his kindness, he contributed to his friend's[1] collection of essays and authorities against the use of

[1] [Montagu's tract printed in 1818, as before noticed.]

spirituous liquors; for, although he had rarely the power to overcome the temptation when presented, he made heroic sacrifices in flight. His final abandonment of tobacco, after many ineffectual attempts, was one of these—a princely sacrifice. He had loved smoking, "not wisely, but too well," for he had been content to use the coarsest varieties of the "great plant." When Dr. Parr,—who took only the finest tobacco, used to half fill his pipe with salt, and smoked with a philosophic calmness,—saw Lamb smoking the strongest preparation of the weed, puffing out smoke like some furious Enchanter, he gently laid down his pipe, and asked him, how he had acquired his power of smoking at such a rate? Lamb replied, "I toiled after it, sir, as some men toil after virtue." Partly to shun the temptations of society, and partly to preserve his sister's health, he fled from London, where his pleasures and his heart were, and buried himself in the solitude of the country, to him always dismal. He would even deny himself the gratification of meeting Wordsworth or Southey, or use it very sparingly during their visits to London, in order that the accompaniments of the table might not entice him to excess. And if sometimes, after miles of solitary communing with his own sad thoughts, the village inn did invite him to quaff a glass of sparkling ale; and if when his retreat was lighted up with the presence of some old friend, he was unable to refrain from the small portion which was too much for his feeble frame, let not the stout-limbed and the happy exult over the consequence! Drinking with him, except so far as it cooled a feverish thirst, was not a sensual, but an intellectual pleasure; it lighted up his fading fancy, enriched his humour, and impelled the struggling thought or beautiful image into day; and perhaps by requiring for him some portion of that allowance which he extended to all human frailties, endeared him the more to those who so often received, and were delighted to bestow it.

Lamb's indulgence to the failings of others could hardly indeed be termed allowance; the name of charity is too cold to suit it. He did not merely love his friends in spite of their errors, but he loved them, errors and all; so near to him was everything human. He numbered among his associates men of all varieties of opinion—philosophical, religious, and

political, and found something to like, not only in the men themselves, but in themselves as associated with their theories and their schemes. In the high and calm, but devious speculations of Godwin, in the fierce hatreds of Hazlitt, in the gentle and glorious mysticism of Coleridge, in the sturdy opposition of Thelwall to the government, in Leigh Hunt's softened and fancy-streaked patriotism, in the gallant Toryism of Stoddart, he found traits which made the individuals more dear to him. When Leigh Hunt was imprisoned in Horsemonger Lane Gaol[1] for a libel, Lamb was one of his most constant visitors; and when Thelwall was striving to bring the "Champion" into notice, Lamb was ready to assist him with his pen, and to fancy himself, for the time, a Jacobin.[2] In this large intellectual tolerance, he resembled Professor Wilson who, notwithstanding his own decided opinions, had a compass of mind large enough to embrace all others which have noble alliances within its range.[3] But not only to opposite opinions and devious habits of thought was Lamb indulgent; he discovered "the soul of goodness in

[1] [By virtue of the sentence passed upon them, John Hunt and his brother Leigh were imprisoned for two years in separate gaols in 1813. The former was sent to Coldbath Fields, which had at that time a large garden, in which Mr. Hunt was permitted to walk. He had from the outset two rooms allotted to him, and became intimate with the Governor, who used often to come and converse with him. My uncle, Mr. C. W. Reynell who, as a lad of fifteen, used to pay a visit occasionally to him on Sunday, tells me that the Governor, when Mrs. Hunt, who had taken lodgings opposite, was ill, offered at his own risk to accompany Mr. Hunt to see her, but Mr. Hunt would not let him incur so grave a responsibility on his account. It is something after seventy-two years to recollect vividly George, the head warder, coming to Mr. Hunt's door in his blue coat and top-boots, with his lantern in one hand and his keys in the other, to remind the young visitor that it was time to lock up for the night, and then my uncle had before him the walk home to Bayswater—a very different one from now!]

[2] The little poem, called "The Three Graves" was written for that journal.

[3] Lamb only once met that remarkable person, and was quite charmed with him. They walked out from Enfield together, and strolled happily a long summer's day, not omitting, however, a call for a refreshing draught. Lamb called for a pot of ale or porter—half of which would have been his own usual allowance, and was delighted to hear the Professor, on the appearance of the foaming tankard, say reproachfully to the waiter, "And one for me!"

things evil" so vividly, that the surrounding evil disappeared from his mental vision. Nothing—no discovery of error or of crime—could divorce his sympathy from a man who had once engaged it. He saw in the spendthrift, the outcast, only the innocent companion of his school-days or the joyous associate of his convivial hours, and he did not even make penitence or reform a condition of his regard. Perhaps he had less sympathy with philanthropic schemers for the improvement of the world than with any other class of men; but of these he numbered two of the greatest, Clarkson the destroyer of the slave-trade, and Basil Montagu the constant opponent of the judicial infliction of death; and the labours of neither have been in vain!

To those who were not intimately acquainted with Lamb the strong disinclination to contemplate another state of being, which he sometimes expressed in his serious conversation, and which he has solemnly confessed in his "New Year's Eve," might cast a doubt on feelings which were essentially pious. The same peculiarity of nature which attached him to the narrow and crowded streets, in preference to the mountain and the glen—which made him loth to quit even painful circumstances and unpleasant or ill-timed company: the desire to seize and grasp all that was nearest, bound him to earth, and prompted his sympathies to revolve within a narrow circle. Yet in that very power of adhesion to outward things might be discerned the strength of a spirit destined to live beyond them. Within the contracted sphere of his habits and desires, he detected the subtlest essences of Christian kindliness, shed over it light from heaven, and peopled it with divine fancies and

> "Thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality."

Although he numbered among his associates freethinkers and sceptics, he had a great dislike to any profane handling of any sacred subjects, and always discouraged polemical discussion. One evening, when Irving and Coleridge were in company, and a young gentleman had spoken slightingly of religion, Lamb remained silent; but when the party broke up, he said to the youth who had thus

annoyed his guests, "Pray, did you come here in a hat, sir, or in a turban?"

The range of Lamb's reading was varied, but yet peculiar. He rejoiced in all old English authors, but cared little for the moderns, except one or two, and those whom he loved as authors because they were his friends. Attached always to things of flesh and blood rather than to "the bare earth and mountains bare, and grass in the green field," he chiefly loved the great dramatists, whose beauties he supported, and sometimes heightened, in his suggestive criticisms. While he enjoyed Wordsworth's poetry, especially "The Excursion," with a love which grew upon him from his youth, he would repeat some of Pope's divine compliments, or Dryden's lines, weighty with sterling sense or tremendous force of satire with eyes trembling into tears. The comedies of Wycherley, Congreve, and Farquhar were not to him gross and sensual, but airy, delicate creations, framed out of coarse materials it might be, but evaporating in wit and grace, harmless effusions of the intellect and the fancy. The ponderous dulness of old controversialists, the dead weight of volumes of once fierce dispute, of which time had exhausted the venom, did not appal him. He liked the massive reading of the old Quaker records, the huge density of old schoolmen, better than the flippancy of modern criticism. If you spoke of Lord Byron, he would turn the subject by quoting the lines descriptive of his namesake in "Love's Labour's Lost"—"Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Byron," &c.—for he could find nothing to revere or love in the poetry of that extraordinary but most uncomfortable poet, except the apostrophe to Parnassus, in which he exults in the sight of the real mountain instead of the mere poetic image. All the Laras and Giaours, and Childe Harolds, were to him but "unreal mockeries,"—the phantasms of a feverish dream,—forms which did not appeal to the sympathies of mankind, and never can find root among them. Shelley's poetry, too, was icy cold to him, except one or two of the minor poems, in which he could not help admiring the exquisite beauty of the expression, and the "Cenci," in which, notwithstanding the painful nature of the subject, there is a warmth and passion, and a correspondent simplicity of

diction, which prove how mighty a poet the author would have become had he lived long enough for his feelings to have free discourse with his creative power. Responding only to the touch of human affection, he could not bear poetry which, instead of making the whole world kin, renders our own passions and frailties and virtues strange to us, presents them at a distance in splendid masquerade, exalts them into new and unauthorised mythology and crystallizes all our freshest loves and mantling joys into clusters of radiant fancies. He made some amends for his indifference to Shelley by his admiration of Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein," which he thought the most extraordinary realization of the idea of a being out of nature which had ever been effected. For the Scotch novels he cared very little, not caring to be puzzled with new plots, and preferring to read Fielding, and Smollett, and Richardson, whose stories were familiar, over and over again, to being worried with the task of threading the maze of fresh adventure. But the good-naturedness of Sir Walter to all his contemporaries won his admiration; and he heartily rejoiced in the greatness of his fame and the rich rewards showered upon him, and desired they might accumulate for the glory of literature and the triumph of kindness. He was never introduced to Sir Walter; [but he had once written to him on behalf of Godwin, and had had through Haydon an invitation to Abbotsford;] and he used to speak with gratitude and pleasure of the circumstances under which he saw him once in Fleet-street. A man, in the dress of a mechanic, stopped him just at Inner Temple-gate, and said, touching his hat, "I beg your pardon, sir, but perhaps you would like to see Sir Walter Scott; that is he just crossing the road;" and Lamb stammered out his hearty thanks to his truly humane informer. [This was some years before he interceded with him for the relief of Godwin's distress in 1822.]

Of his own writings it is now superfluous to speak; for, after having encountered long derision and neglect, they have taken their place among the classics of his language. They stand alone, at once singular and delightful. They are all carefully elaborated; yet never were works written in a higher defiance to the conventional pomp of style. A

sly hit, a happy pun, a humorous combination, lets the light into the intricacies of the subject, and supplies the place of ponderous sentences. As his serious conversation was his best, so his serious writing is far preferable to his fantastical humours,—cheering as they are, and suggestive ever as they are of high and invigorating thoughts. Seeking his materials, for the most part, in the common paths of life,—often in the humblest,—he gives an importance to everything, and sheds a grace over all. The spirit of gentility seems to breathe around all his persons; he detects the venerable and the excellent in the narrowest circumstances and humblest conditions with the same subtilty which reveals the hidden soul of the greatest works of genius. In all things he is most human.

Among the felicities of Lamb's chequered life, that which he esteemed most was his intimate friendship with Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth,[1] the last of whom has paid a tribute to his memory, which may fitly close these pages.

> "To a good Man of most dear memory
> This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
> From the great city where he first drew breath,
> Was reared and taught; and humbly earned his bread,
> To the strict labours of the merchant's desk
> By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
> Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress
> His spirit, but the recompense was high;
> Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire;
> Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
> And when the precious hours of leisure came,
> Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
> With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
> With a keen eye, and overflowing heart:
> So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
> And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
> Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
> And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
> Thus innocently sported, breaking forth

[1] [Surely Talfourd might have added Manning and Hazlitt, whose contribution to his happiness and intellectual enjoyment was at least as large as that of the three writers named in the text. His estimate of Hazlitt is expressed clearly and emphatically enough in the Epistle of 1823 to Southey.]

As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
Had been derived the name he bore—a name,
Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged
A soul by resignation sanctified:
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
O, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!

* * * * *

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is missed;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain:
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend,
But more in show than truth; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers;
And taking up a voice shall speak (though still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity,
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.
'Wonderful' hath been
The love established between man and man,
'Passing the love of women;' and between
Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock joined
Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love

Without whose blissful influence Paradise
Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human form,
Direst of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
That he hath been an Elm without his Vine,
And her bright dower of clustering charities,
That, round his trunk and branches, might have clung
Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word
Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanising, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
More than sufficient recompense!

Her love
(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
Was as the love of mothers; and when years,
Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part
Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And seasons' difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they—and such through life they *might* have been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, through all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worst fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child

Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.

O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared,
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown."

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

(Vol. i., p. 365.)

Sir George [*William*] *Young.*—I have been unable to obtain any information about this gentleman, whom Lamb in two successive letters to Hazlitt calls *Sir George* and *Sir William*. Although he possessed an important collection of pictures, he does not seem to be named in the Obituary of the "Gentleman's Magazine," nor does his name occur in Cunningham or Jesse. I observe that in the List of Subscribers to the Topographical Map of Kent, 1769, by Andrews, Dury, and Herbert, is *Sir George Young, Bart.*—possibly the same person.

(Vol. ii., p. 374.)

Illness of Miss Isola.—The subjoined note to Moxon was omitted in its proper place:—

TO EDWARD MOXON.

[Enfield, 21 Feb., 1831.]

"Dear M.,—I came to town last week, but could not stretch so far as you. A letter has just come from Mrs. Wms. to say that Emma is so poorly that she must have long holydays here. It has agitated us so much, & we shall expect her so hourly, that you shall excuse me to Wordsth for not coming up; we are both nervous & poorly. Your punctual newspapers are our bit of comfort. Adieu, till better times.

"C. LAMB.

"Ryle comes on Sunday week. Can you come with him? See him."

(Vol. ii., p. 395.)

Last removal to Edmonton.—The Lambs, after their relinquishment of London as a place of regular abode, had moved in succession to Islington (with an occasional sojourn at Dalston), Enfield, and Edmonton. All these selections of locality appear to have been more or less fortuitous.

Islington, from its unusual accessibility to the theatre of their labours, was then, as it still is, a favourite haunt of the clerks employed in the City; and Lamb was no doubt led to seek quarters there by some of his colleagues who had preceded him.

Dalston, again, was a vicinity familiarized to him by the Novellos; and at Enfield his next-door neighbour was his quondam tailor Leishman who, on giving up his business in Blandford Court, near Marlborough House, had retired to Chase Side. Doubtless it was through him more immediately that Lamb chose that once pleasant suburb as a residence, though he must have been well acquainted with the place from the Clarkes' school there and its association with Keats.

The ultimate migration to Edmonton was equally due to a casual circumstance. Miss Lamb had originally stayed there under the charge of the Waldens, who possessed experience in the management of persons of unsound mind; and her brother judged it better, on the whole, that he should live with her, as it were, than that she should live with him. It was, in fact, a compromise, as Miss Lamb became prone to attacks, between a home and an asylum.

(Vol. ii., p. 396.)

Letter to Miss Betham.—Subjoined is an accurate copy of this letter. I unfortunately employed a transcript, which has proved to be inexact, and the inference drawn from the allusion to Southey's loss of course falls to the ground. For the letter was placed too late in the series. Moreover, that printed at p. 24 of vol. ii. under the same date, may be, after all, of 1815, as the postscript, on which I was induced to rely, really belongs to the present note. So much for transcripts!

TO MISS MATILDA BETHAM.

"Dear Miss Betham,—I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank, as you requested. Poor S., what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoyce in the prospect of seeing you soon in Town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect & love you more than ourselves. Pray present our kind remembrances to Barbara and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable.

"Yours very sincerely, "C. Lamb.

"Have you seen *Christabel* since its publication?

"E. I. H., 1 June, 1816."

(Vol. ii., p. 397.)

Legacy from Miss Betham's sister.—The legacy was £30, and was left to Miss Lamb by Mrs. Anne Norman, *née* Betham. Lamb gave Miss Matilda Betham a receipt for it (£27, being £30 less duty,) on the 3rd February, 1834, "for Mary Anne Lamb, the said Mary Lamb being at present of unsound mind, and under my charge."

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